

Take an edifying stroll along the old College Street and surrounding hutongs.

Page 16



Meet 27-year-old Xu Wen, a film aficionado going it alone.

Page 9



Cui Jian, father of Chinese rock, sees a grim future for live concerts by Chinese artists.

Page 12



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‘I’m in Heaven’

Skater comes in from cold, wins first China winter gold

By Shan Jinliang

Heroism is not defined by success.

She was firm favorite approaching the 1,500-meter short track speed skating final. Yang Yang (A) had won the event three of the last four times at the world championships, in addition to winning the overall classification four straight years.

But the five-time world champion faltered, finished fourth and lost face in front of a global TV audience and 1.3 billion compatriots on Wednesday last week.

“The loss was unexpectedly great. It even made me doubt my own ability. I force myself to sleep in bed these days, but in vain,” she wrote in *Beijing Youth Daily* the next day.

In the days before the short track speed skating 500 meters final in Salt Lake City on Saturday, teammates and officials tried to psyche her out of it.

“Who do you think you are?” said Yang Yang “(S)”, so named to distinguish her from her namesake and teammate “(A)”. “You are even worse than me. I won three silver medals.”

But she knew it was all just mind games, Yang said. “The 1,500 meters was like a nightmare for me,” said Yang. “I lost the race because of myself. I could not take the pressure off myself.

“I told myself, ‘you are Yang Yang (A). You have won five world championships.’ I felt embarrassed. Before the 500 meters, I told myself, ‘I am Yang Yang (A)’ and to race like I had before.”

One the third day, she rose to the occasion. Yang shot into an early lead and was never challenged, powering her way to gold ahead of Bulgaria’s Evgenia Radanova and compatriot Wang Chunlu. Ascension lasted 44.187 seconds.

“I fell from heaven to hell and rose from hell to heaven, in a few days,” said a tearful Yang afterwards surrounded by coaches, teammates and the press.

Yang’s family lit firecrackers six days after spring festival and after more than a decade of frustration for China’s winter athletes, who began competing in the Winter Olympics in 1992 at the Albertville Games. In three previous Winter Games, China has captured 14 medals (10 silver, 4 bronze) but never managed to place a competitor on top of the podium.



Yang Yang (A) and teammate Wang Chunlu Xinhua photo

Ready for ‘Turandot’

Chinese opera singers begin rehearsals

By Zhu Lin

The performers for Chinese *Turandot* have been chosen. The performance will premiere in September in the USA and in China in late October.

All the performers are Chinese. Out of more than 120 candidates short listed, 20 were selected. Tenor Dai Yuqiang will perform Prince Calaf. Dai sang at the Three Tenors’ concert in the Forbidden City on June 23. Soprano He Hui will perform Princess Turandot or Liu. She cooperated with Placido Domingo in his recital in Shanghai on January 5.

Other main roles include sopranos Guo Zhiling and Wu Lin from Beijing, Wei Song and Yang Xiaoyong from Shanghai.

Three Tenors’ producer Tibor Rudas’ company has invested \$3 million on the project and will manage overseas marketing. Staging and costume design will be done in China. The singers begin rehearsals early March.



Dai Yuqiang



He Hui



Hail to the Chinese – US President George W Bush and First Lady Laura Bush arrive in Capital Airport on a warm winter morning yesterday.

Day to Remember

Diplomat recalls Nixon-Mao meeting

Now 83, retired Chinese diplomat Xiong Xianghui still recalls a tense moment during US President Nixon’s historic “ice-breaking journey” to China 30 years ago.

The first round of talks between the two sides was scheduled for 4:30 pm at the Great Hall of the People on February 21. The press corps gathered at the reception hall in the southern entrance at about 4 pm, but Nixon – always on time – failed to show up.

Press on both sides were looking at their watches. At 3:55 pm, it was announced Chairman Mao Zedong had – unexpectedly – just met Nixon in his study at Zhongnanhai. The meeting had lasted 2.40-3.50 pm. The world had just changed unalterably, as commentators on both sides of the Pacific later noted.

Premier Zhou Enlai marveled to Chinese colleagues later, that Mao – recovering from a serious illness – “did not even cough once,” as Xiong recalls. As assistant to Zhou, Xiong was involved in preparations on the Chinese side for Nixon’s unprecedented visit from the very beginning – since the secret trip to Beijing made by Henry Kissinger, Nixon’s national security advisor, in July 1971.

Xiong, a graduate of Western Reserve University in the late 1940s and Chinese charge d’affaires in London in the 1960s, was also among the Chinese officials who met Nixon and his entourage at the Capital Airport here on February 21, 1972. The scene of Nixon extending his hand to Zhou as soon as he set foot in the Chinese capital became the classic image of the visit.

“The Star-Spangled Banner’ had never sounded so stirring to me as on that windswept runway” in the Chinese capital, Nixon recalled in his memoirs.

“The honor guard was one of the finest I have ever seen. They were



On February 21, 1972, American President Richard Nixon’s special plane arrived at the Beijing Capital Airport, greeted by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. Zhou said to Nixon: “You are extending your hands across the vastest ocean of the world for a handshake with me. There has been no exchange between our two nations for 25 years.” Nixon said: “This is a handshake by the Chinese and the US leaders across an ocean and a confrontation of the 20-odd years, signaling the opening of a new chapter in the Sino-US relationship.”

Xinhua photo

big men, strong-looking, and immaculately turned out.”

After the ceremony, Nixon and his White House staff were put up in Building No. 18 of the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse. President George W Bush stayed at the St. Regis Hotel on his visit last night.

Nixon said in his memoirs that he was struck that Mao, though speaking “with some difficulty,” had a mind that “was moving like lightning” and had “a remarkable sense of humor.”

Mao opened his conversation with Nixon by talking about philosophy,

because, Xiong analyzed, he had read from a report that while stopping at Guam on his way to China, Nixon had mentioned he expected to talk with Mao from a philosophical approach.

This, Xiong says, inspired Mao and his talk with Nixon was not confined to certain diplomatic protocols, which could be handled by Premier Zhou. Mao was aware that official talks had been scheduled, and so he checked the time with Zhou at 3.45 pm. But Xiong, based on the minutes of the meeting, says that as Mao motioned

to end the meeting, Nixon said, “We know you and the premier have taken great risks inviting us here. For us also it was a difficult decision.

“But I have read some of the Chairman’s works, and I have noticed the Chairman has written that when an opportunity comes, one must ‘seize the day, seize the hour.’”

Thus, the conversation continued.

Later on that evening, in his toast at the banquet given by Premier Zhou in his honor, Nixon quoted this line from a poem by Mao once again, to emphasize the importance and necessity of forging a new China policy.

In fact, Xiong says, Mao and Zhou had also acknowledged Nixon’s courage in making the “difficult decision” and approved of it.

“That is why Premier Zhou arranged a scroll of another poem by Mao in his calligraphy about Lushan Mountain to be displayed in Nixon’s dining room at Diaoyutai.

“Its last line reads, ‘Matchless scenery dwells on the perilous peak,’” he said.

The American press hailed Mao’s meeting with Nixon as “unprecedented,” “unexpected” and “a highly honored treatment,” Xiong says.

Xiong conceived the phrase for Premier Zhou’s toast at the banquet: “Owing to reasons known to all, contacts between the two peoples were suspended for over 20 years.”

Nixon, who had read Mao poems for his maiden trip to China, compared the journey to the 16,000-mile Long March led by Mao in the 1930s. At the banquet on his last night in China, he said the joint communique that had just been issued “will make headlines around the world tomorrow. But what we have said in that communique is not nearly as important as what we will do in the years ahead to build a bridge across 16,000 miles and 22 years of hostility which have divided us in the past.”

(Xinhua)

Beijing to World: *We Will Defend Fair Trade*

By Xiao Rong

A coordinating system for the fair trade of import and export of Beijing will be established to protect local enterprises from suffering anti-dumping measures taken by foreign countries.

This announcement was made by the Municipal Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation Committee, under the joint effort of the Beijing Economy Commission, the Beijing Agriculture Commission and the Capital

Customs.

An import precautionary system will be set up for local enterprises that are influential but lack competitiveness. Some key imported products will also be tracked in terms of prices and quantities so as to take anti-dumping measures when necessary.

Legal aid will be offered to help local enterprises deal with anti-dumping lawsuits. In addition, the volume of exports waits to be enlarged, especially that

of light industry, textile industry and agriculture. Thus an increase of exports in these frequently targeted areas would compensate for the large losses incurred by Chinese exporting companies.

Enterprises are encouraged to file lawsuit cases to try to maintain original market shares for exporting products that have already suffered anti-dumping taxes from foreign countries.

The Committee will also collect examples of unfair treatment

regarding anti-dumping charges on exporting products, and refer these to related governmental organizations to ensure the legitimate rights of local enterprises by means of bilateral or multi-lateral trade negotiations.

China has been the country whose export products have suffered from the largest number of anti-dumping investigations around the world since 1996. About one third of China's anti-dumping cases met with no

response, thus leading to a minimum loss of ten billion dollars.

Beijing Chemical Industry Group made an application for anti-dumping investigation on behalf of the Chinese acrylic acid ester industry against U.S. and Japan in 1999, which was the city's first successful anti-dumping lawsuit case. As a result, 31 percent to 69 percent anti-dumping tax was levied by China on imported acrylic acid ester from U.S. and Japan.

China Cuts Interest Rates by 0.25 %

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) announced in Beijing Wednesday that it has decided to lower the interest rates of deposits in Renminbi by an average of 0.25 percentage points as of February 21.

According to the announcement, the annual interest rate of current deposits is lowered from 0.99 percent to 0.72 percent, while that of one-year fixed-term deposits is lowered from 2.25 percent to 1.98 percent.

At the same time, the annual interest rate of various loans is lowered by an average of 0.5 percentage points. The interest rates for deposited reserves by financial institutions in the central bank is lowered from 2.07 percent to 1.89 percent.

A spokesman for the PBOC said that the central bank's decision aims to overcome the negative effects of the slowed growth of the global economy on the development of China's economy, and maintain sustained development of the national economy. (Xinhua)

Nepal Celebrates National Democracy Day

By Jiang Zhong

The embassy of Nepal in China celebrated the country's 52nd National Democracy Day on the night of February 19, 2002.

Some one hundred guests, including Fu Ying, Director General of the Asian Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were invited to the banquet held by the embassy. The other guests mainly came from the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, the Ministry of Culture, the Friendship Association and universities of Beijing and Tianjin.

Mr Rajeshwar Acharya, Royal Nepalese ambassador, said at the ceremony that the family rule of the Rana in Nepal was overthrown in 1950 and democracy was established. Then every year on Falgun 7 (according to the Nepalese calendar) people celebrate the National Democracy Day at home and abroad.

Mr Acharya also said that the King and the people of Nepal treasured the friendship between their country and China very much. The diplomatic relationship between the two countries was set up in 1951, less than one year after the Nepalese people's victory in fighting for democracy.

Fu Ying said that though China itself was also a developing country, it had helped Nepal as much as possible in many aspects of its development. The solid White Stupa, which was designed by Nepalese architect Arnigo, standing in Beijing's Miaoying Temple, testified to the close friendship between China and Nepal.

During the ceremony, Nepalese artists presented the guests with Nepalese traditional performances.

English Translation for Foreign Victims

By Xiao Rong

An English version of lawsuit right notification for the injured party will soon be used by the Shunyi District Procuratorate.

Based on the Chinese version of the notification, the English version covers the ten major lawsuit rights of the foreign injured party, including the right of taking legal proceedings in the victim's native language.

The written notification in English can now be transferred to the foreign injured party within three days while in the past the victim could only be orally informed with the help of an interpreter.

Returning Overseas Chinese Enjoy Visa and Permit Benefits

By Ivy Zhang

Overseas talents of Chinese descent who return to China can now enjoy a series of benefits when getting their visa or residence permit.

According to the China Overseas Service Center that is entrusted by the Ministry of Education to certify the identity of the overseas students, state recognized high-caliber Chinese who return from abroad are grouped into the following six categories.

- * Those who are hired to fill leadership positions at higher learning institutions in China or work as professors, associate professors, researchers or associate researchers.

- * Those who sign a one-year-term or longer contract with higher learning institutions and need to return to China for teaching, research or academic activities.

- * Those who take senior management positions (Deputy General Manager or above) at local corporations or self-owned businesses.

- * Those who execute agreements or contracts concluded

between central or local government and foreign countries for key state research or engineering projects.

- * Those who make above-average investment in China.

- * Those who go to the west of China for teaching, scientific research or starting up businesses in compliance with state strategy of developing the west area.

Certified overseas talent may go to the Division of Exit-Entry Administration of the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau to get a multiple round trip visa or two- to five-year long residence permit.

Required documents are the Chinese residence certificate issued by the Beijing Personnel Bureau, passport, photos and physical examination paper. It usually takes four working days to get the visa or residence permit issued. In case of emergency, a shorter time is provided for, according to Pang Jiang, director of the visa section at the Division of Exit-Entry Administration of the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau.

Wild Horses Enjoy Year of Horse

By Xiao Rong

The 24 wild horses set free in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region can at last enjoy the early spring of China's New Year of the Horse.

Another 18 endangered Xinjiang wild horses, raised in captivity, will be sent back to their original habitat this spring. The first group of 27 wild horses was set free into the Kala Maili Nature Reserve in northern Xinjiang on August 28 last year, resulting in two colts dying from cold and starvation, and one mare going missing.

Experts say the fact that most of the first batch of wild horses has survived after a severe winter shows that the ability of wild horses to live in their natural habitat is improving.

"Although the remaining

24 wild horses have on the whole got used to the natural conditions, low temperatures have severely affected their activities and their search for food and water," said Cao Jie, head of the Xinjiang Wild Horse Breeding and Research Center.

Thus, the 18 wild horses to be released this spring will be set free by degree, first from a small enclosure to a larger enclosure, and eventually completely into the wild, according to Zhu Fude, director of the Wild Fauna Protection Institute of Xinjiang Forestry Administration.

China launched a program of bringing wild horses back home in 1985 by adopting 18 wild horses from Britain and Germany. Up till now, there are 113 wild horses in Xinjiang, with the number around the world reaching 1,300.

China's First Home-cloned Calves in Good Condition

By Xiao Rong

The Spring Festival of the Year of the Horse has seen China's first home-cloned calves grow from strength to strength.

The six cloned calves were born respectively in January and February this year in Caoxian County of east China's Shandong province.

Under the 24-hour care of the six research staff of the Zhongda Animal Embryo Engineering Center, the six cloned calves have enjoyed a healthy appetite and spirit, with normal body temperatures and breathing.

The only "boy" of the six cloned calves was cloned from a beef cow, while the other five "sisters" look almost identical because they were all cloned from the skin cell of a Holstein dairy cow.

The six cloned calves can be moved into the calf nursing room alongside other calves in a few days since they are in good condition, said Du Qike, one of the researchers at the center.

So far, all the surrogate cows in the center have produced cloned calves, with a 50 percent rate of survival.



We Miss You, Xiaoping!

A bunch of chrysanthemums and lilies were sent to the Deng Xiaoping Revolutionary Achievements Commemoration Room located at the Memorial Hall of Chairman Mao on February 19, which marks the fifth anniversary of Deng Xiaoping's death. No commemorative activities will be held

in the Room in keeping with the last wish of Deng Xiaoping. However, several units have called to make an appointment for group visits on the first working day after the Spring Festival.

Photo by Cheng Tieliang

New Bankruptcy Law Awaits Approval

By Xiao Rong

The final edition of the amendment of China's Bankruptcy Law is waiting to be approved by the National People's Congress, revealed Professor Li Shuguang, a member of the legislating office of the new Bankruptcy Law.

The new law reflects a good combination of China's national conditions and the advanced experiences of foreign countries, according to Li.

"Some legislating technologies of the Bankruptcy Law of developed countries, like the restructuring system and the bankruptcy administrator system, were adopted by the new law," Li said.

The new law puts great emphasis on provisions for bankruptcy of national enterprises. Besides, bankruptcy of private-owned enterprises and joint ventures are also referred to in the new law.

"In the process of bankruptcy, the government will play an increasingly less important role.

While some independent intermediary organizations or professionals are becoming more and more involved," said Li.

"From the legal angle, the bankruptcy law can help protect the rights of both creditors and debtors, especially those of creditors, so that the order of the market economy could be ensured," added Li.

Li warned that a group of Enrons could appear in China due to the backwardness of the legal environment and lack of good bankruptcy law in the country.

The current Bankruptcy Law in China was launched in 1986. Based on the planned economy, the old law was simple in clauses and had no clear definitions covering basic concepts of bankruptcy.

As a result, the revision of the law began as early as 1994, aiming at globalizing China's bankruptcy law system to adapt to the socialist market economy.

Airport Extension under Discussion

By Jiao Pei

A tentative project for extending Beijing Capital Airport is currently under discussion, aiming at expanding annual passenger-handling capacity to 40 million people by 2008, and 58 million people by 2010.

The Capital Airport, the biggest one in China, came under strain during the Spring Festival holiday rush, revealing the need for expansion, especially for the future Olympic Games in 2008. The airport handled over 20 million people last year. This year figures are estimated to rise to over 27 million people, beyond the capacity of the terminal building. The project involves building another

runway and some auxiliary facilities, including a new terminal building.

The first phase of the project must start by next June and possibly be completed by 2007, according to Zhang Zhantao, secretary of the Chinese Communist Youth League Committee.

"This is just a plan, and is still being discussed by the State Development and Planning Commission and Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) and some other government departments. All we can say for now is that it's hopeful," said Xue Xianzong, director of the Party Politics Office of Beijing Capital Airport.

New Auto Classification to Meet International Standards

By Jiang Zhong

China will begin to classify its cars in March into categories for home and commercial use as part of its effort to gear to influential norms.

Cars were classified differently from international standards in the past in China, said Jia Xinguang, senior researcher at the Chinese Auto Industry Development Research Institute. Three categories including sedan, passenger car and truck were adopted in the old classification standards, including twelve sub-categories.

The old standards had created confusion and inefficiency in auto management. The new standards will be based on vehicle emission volume and loading capacity, which will supply international criteria for judging the overall performance of Chinese domestic-made vehicles. Many other specifications will be adopted in drafting sub-categories.

Jia emphasized that the new standards will not impact the tax system of the Chinese auto market, since tax is mainly levied according to the number of seats and loading capacity.

The old standards also caused inconvenience to many drivers. For example, some cars featuring the same specifications as sedans were included in the category of light passenger car, and were subsequently not allowed to drive down Chang'an Avenue. Jiang Lin, a light passenger car owner, is waiting to see whether his car will be allowed to run on the main artery of the capital after March.

Motorola Sees Global Drop but Boom in China

By Xu Ying

Motorola, the world's second-largest cell phone maker, forecast on Tuesday that the mobile networks equipment market would shrink by four percent this year, while China would show a healthy growth.

Motorola and Ericsson, the world's largest suppliers of mobile networks, had said last month that sales of mobile infrastructure equipment could fall by as much as ten percent in 2002 as cash-strapped carriers delay purchases amid the global economic downturn.

"China will continue to grow even if there's slower subscriber growth there. We still expect very good growth there," said Adrian Nemcek, president of Motorola's global telecoms solutions sector, adding this would be supported by growth in China's gross domestic product this year.

China, which has overtaken the United States as the largest mobile phone market, has become a key market for wireless equipment producers due to falling demand in Europe and the U.S. after years of runaway growth.

China Telecom's IPO Awaits Break Up

By Xu Ying

China Telecom is waiting for the government to carry out a break-up plan to boost competition, but officials have no idea when the restructure will be complete, a company official said on Tuesday.

The timing of the long-awaited restructure of the country's fixed-line operator is crucial because it must be completed before China Telecom can carry out its planned \$3.5 billion overseas listing.

"This is a 100 percent state-owned enterprise, and we need approval from the central government before being formally established," said Chen Aiping, head of the company's international business department.

"And we don't know when that will be," she said in a phone interview.

CONSUMER INDUSTRY



Michi's demise has led to fiercer competition among instant noodle producers

Photo by Chen Shuyi

Michi Noodles Goes Broke

After a loss of 52 million yuan, China's fourth largest instant noodle producer goes to the wall

By Shan Jinliang

Michi Food Company, a leading Chinese instant noodles producer, applied for bankruptcy to Beijing No.1 Intermediate People's Court recently.

The case has been accepted and heard by the court. Meanwhile Tingshin International Corporation and President Corporation, the No.1 and No.2 competitors respectively, have firmly held their markets.

When *Beijing Today* called Michi, nobody answered, and michichina.com, the company's website cannot be opened. No Michi instant noodles can be found at Glory of the City Supermarket near Tuanjiehu Park.

"We stopped selling that kind of noodles from the end of 2001," said Hou Baochen, a director of the supermarket.

Since Michi, a Singapore-invested company, began to sell instant noodles in 1992, it captured a large proportion of the market. The sales volume began to fall from 1997, but it still occupied fourth position in 2000. The giant fell from the rank of a famous business with an investment volume of 11.28 million dollars to a company making a loss of 6.3 million dollars in just ten years, according to the financial report in November 2001.

The declaration of bankruptcy by the lawyers of Michi testifies to the company's lack of

control over the market, and the slow renewal of their products. Poor business management and high production costs of the products caused a capital flow problem in the company.

"I'm really surprised. Michi has always been a solid player in the instant noodle market," said Li Kequan, manager of the market department of President Corporation (Shanghai). Li also said that apart from their high quality instant noodles, the company also introduced one or two new kinds of product to the market to meet the demand for new tastes.

When asked if low profit from the instant noodles is an important cause for Michi's fail-

ure, Li said he comment. CCTV reported that although market competition was severe, Michi's profit could in no way fall below 0.01 yuan per package. Li argued that actual profits for all instant noodle producers ranged from 10-20 percent of the price of each product.

Michi market competition strategy proved to be off-target as the company mainly deals with instant noodles in urban areas. Statistics by Sinomonitor International, a market monitoring company, show that urban instant noodles consumption decreased by three percent from 1998 to 1999.

Tingshin International Corporation and President Corpora-

tion no longer lay all their eggs in one basket in response to the shrinkage of the urban instant noodle market. The two consumer giants have extended their business to drinks, cookies, fast food and even real estate.

To maintain their market shares, the two leading corporations began large-scale promotions following market trends. While promotions by Michi proved to be a flop when they pushed seafood instant noodles in 1999.

The two giants expanded the market into rural areas exploiting their brand and cost advantages. They sell the noodles at almost zero profit only to capture the potential market.

Cola Small Fry Take On Giants

Who will win the soda war?

By Zhao Yijiang

Coke and Pepsi are facing competition from retailer brand colas in China's supermarkets. The two soda heavyweights may find their dominant position in the Chinese soft drinks industry threatened by these new arrivals, say analysts.

Small brands are on the move

As the largest product category in supermarkets, carbonated soft drinks have proven to be the ideal cornerstone for retail brand program development in the United States. China is now preparing to adapt this business model to its own market.

Beijing Sanhe Meile Beverages Company disclosed recently that it had obtained permission from Canadian Cott Corporation (Nasdaq: COTT) to use the prescription of "Royal Crown Cola" and develop store-brand colas in China.

Toronto-based Cott Corporation is one of the world's leading suppliers of retailer brand carbonated soft drinks with a sales volume of more than \$1 billion in 2001. It produces, packages and distributes a wide selection of

retailer brand beverages for grocery, mass-merchandise, drug-store and convenience store chains, as well as wholesalers. Working with Wal-Mart, Cott achieved and has maintained a high market share for Sam's American Choice cola against product leaders Coca-Cola and Pepsi.

Sanhe Meile is keen to continue Cott's success in China, according to its president Ji Jun, who is discussing cooperation with Wal-Mart. He said the business model would make a three-win situation. The supplier could sell their product directly and acquire more stable profit. The retailers will become more competitive by using their own brand program as a point of differentiation. The consumer would be attracted to the product by the relatively low price.

Another food giant, French Danone Group is also interested in the field of private label soft drinks. Danone cooperated with many supermarkets in marketing their store-brand line of soda pop through its branch company, Shanghai Yaqing Industrial and Trading Company. They



Sam's Choice sits besides Pepsi in supermarkets

produced "American Cola" with Carrefour at a price of only 1.5 yuan.

International brands watching

Coca-Cola and Pepsi are keeping an eye on the retailer brands and investigating the new development. But a Pepsi insider said it would not adjust its pricing system without consideration. They believe that the key factor to success is not the price but the brand. And their strategic partnership with Wal-Mart, Carrefour, as well as many other supermarkets will secure their leading position. Coca-Cola shares the same outlook, believ-

ing that their 23 years' efforts of brand building in China will make most consumers remain loyal to Coca-Cola. Experts argue however that an international brand may not necessarily lead consumers to believe its product is superior.

Brand or price?

Stephen Arbeit, partner at Coopers & Lybrand Consulting pointed out that soft drinks are the most deal-driven category in the supermarket. When premium, private label colas (like Sam's Choice at Wal-Mart) were introduced, Coca-Cola and Pepsi both dropped their price to stay alive. "When we read that

the incursion of private labels into the soft drink category has been halted, we should realize that it was done at the expense of drastic price-cutting of the famous brands," he said.

In the United States, private label brands represent a significant threat to their national label competitors. Throughout the past two decades private labels have accounted for between 12 percent and 20 percent of annual grocery sales. Thus, although Coca-Cola and Pepsi are two of the world's acknowledged and respected great brands, they must face new challenges in the new front line.

200 Billion Yuan Bad Assets for Sale

By Zhao Hongyi

China will dispose of more than 200 billion yuan bad assets this year, aiming at a 30 billion yuan return.

Of the 30 billion yuan return target, Cinda AMC aims at 10.5 billion yuan, Huarong at 8 billion yuan, Oriental at 5 billion yuan

and Great Wall at 5 billion yuan.

Cinda, Huarong, Oriental and the Great Wall are the four state owned asset management companies handling more than 1.4 trillion yuan bad assets from the state owned banks.

The four companies will restructure the bad assets in

their possession, packing the assets into categories of industries and geographic locations before selling. Targeted purchasers include both overseas investors and domestic private investors.

Sources from Great Wall said the company would carry out a

new round of road shows abroad in April this year.

So far, Great Wall has finished the project search program and listed all projects for sale in nearly 20 categories such as real estate, pharmaceuticals, constructional materials, textiles and fabrics, minerals, papermak-

ing and power generation. Of these, 63 projects are in real estate, and 24 are in share options sales.

The project search program covers 167 projects for sale, with total assets amounting to 11 billion yuan, according to sources from Great Wall.

Beijing Invites Private and Foreign Capital for Sewage System

By Zhao Hongyi

Beijing municipal government has established a market-orientated urban sewage disposal company, Beijing Drainage Group Co. Ltd, as a part of the environmental clean up for the 2008 Olympic Games to be held in the city. Investment is encouraged from domestic private sources as well as from overseas investors.

The new company will manage all municipal development issues relating to sewage treatment and disposal.

The municipality reached an agreement with the World Bank for a loan of 4.8 billion yuan for drainage for the years from 2000 to 2006. A number of sewage treatment mills such as Wujia-cun mill, Xiaohongmen mill and Lugouqiao mill are under construction. In addition, the municipal government has started cleaning Liangshui River and Qinghe River, two large river systems that run through the capital.

Beijing Drainage Group also reached an agreement with a domestic company to build the Xiaojiahe Sewage Treatment Mill in the western part of the city, according to Xuan Yongli, an official from the group.

Beijing Drainage Group has a daily sewage treatment and disposal capability of 1.28 million cubic meters, 42% of the daily sewage produced in the municipality. The company aims at raising the rate to 80% by 2004 and 90% by 2006.

Emerging Skiing Hobbies Offer Market Potential

By Zhao Hongyi

Chinese have been increasingly taking to the hills on skis as a way of escaping the capital, especially over the Spring Festival holidays.

A total of 14 skiing and skating sites are now open for business around Beijing, of which six are for skiing. Since the start of winter last November, people have preferred to spend their weekends and holidays skiing rather than the more traditional skating. Subsequently, a skiing business is emerging, which includes skiing, and travel services, accommodation, souvenirs and other skiing related commodities.

Experts in the industry believe that due to the geographic location of Beijing, the skiing business can run till March, and that the number of visitors, motivated by the hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games, will increase year by year.

Problems and difficulties also exist in the development of the industry. Most of the ski pistes can hardly maintain high quality facilities due to lack of snow, therefore, artificial snow is required from time to time. The quality of accommodation, design of souvenirs and other services also need improvement, which in turn offers a huge potential market both to domestic and overseas investors.

ING Group Strides into China

By Zhao Hongyi

ING Insurance, part of the ING Group, the Dutch investing and asset-managing conglomerate, signed a letter of intent to establish a joint life insurance venture with Beijing Capital Group earlier this month in Beijing.

Total investment will amount to 500 million yuan, with each party providing half of the total, revealed sources from the Beijing Capital Group. ING Insurance will play an effective management role in the joint venture company.

The joint venture is the second life insurance operation that ING has established in China, after its successful life insurance joint venture, Pacific Aetna Life Insurance Company (PALIC) in Shanghai.

"This agreement fits ING's strategy and commitment to China. We are looking forward to leveraging our global experience to help expand the life insurance market in Dalian," said Fred Hubbell, member of the ING Group Executive Board.

Since 1993, ING Insurance has established representative offices in Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou and Dalian. ING was granted a license to start a life insurance business in China in June 2000.

Beijing Capital Group (BCG) is a large-scale, mainly state-owned corporation subordinated to the Beijing Municipal Government. By the end of 2000, BCG's total assets were 21 billion yuan (\$2.5 billion). BCG is engaged in activities like securities, asset management, real estate, hi-tech industry, hotels, agriculture, business and trade.

The Beijing market will remain closed to foreign insurance companies for two years after the entry. The new joint venture will be based in Dalian, which is one of the first four cities opened to foreign insurance companies.



Mr. Alfonso Campo Soto, Colombian ambassador in Beijing, promotes Colombian coffee at Dongan Temple Fair held in Wangfujing street
Photo by Fan Jiwen

Chinese Temple Fairs Offer Exotic Taste & Business Opportunities

By Zhao Hongyi

More foreign businesspersons are grasping Chinese temple fairs as moneymaking opportunities rather than just sightseeing excursions.

Temple fairs create traditional free markets, particularly in holidays like Spring Festival around Chinese temples.

Last week, China's lunar new year enjoyed an exotic flavor at Beijing's Chaoyang International Carnival that kicked off from February 12. Folk dances and parades from the United States, Russia, Germany, Italy, Brazil, Turkey and Mexico attracted merry-makers accustomed to attending temple fairs and cultural events featuring purely Chinese folk art.

Visitors grabbed the chance to taste exotic food such as German roast suckling pig and Turkish barbecue. Special foreign New Year's gifts were also available at the fair, where band performances and fashion shows were also staged.

In the meantime, more foreign vendors could be seen at Ditan (earth temple), Longtan (dragon lake), Baiyunguan (white clouds temple), Daguan yuan (grand garden) and Changdian (bookstore and paper mill street) temple fairs.

More than 60 temple fairs were held during the

spring festival holidays in Beijing alone. Total revenue accounted for over 100 million yuan (\$12.5 million). The average income of an outlet booth, or a vendor ranged between 5,000-10,000 yuan (\$625-\$1,250) per day. The Chaoyang District government has promised to continue the carnival in Chaoyang Park over spring festival next year.



A German chef sells famous sausages at the Chaoyang International Carnival held throughout the Spring Festival week
Photo provided by Xinhua

National Insurance Conference Attracts Foreign Executives



Mr. Alfred Edward Bergbauer, general manager of Swiss Winterthur Insurance (Asia) Ltd. Shanghai Branch



Mr. Ian Faragher, chief executive of Greater China, Federal Insurance Company under the American Chubb Group



Mr. Joachim Wiebring, deputy general manager of the Shanghai based Allianz Dazhong Life Insurance Co. Ltd. and his overseas counterparts attended the national insurance conference which used to be an annual meeting held by the central government only for domestic businessmen concerned



Mr. Anthony Higgins, CEO of the Shanghai based John Hancock Tianan Life Insurance Company

Photos by Wang Jian

By Zhao Hongyi

China will completely fulfill its WTO commitment on the liberalization of its insurance market, promised Ma Yongwei, chairman of China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC). Ma made these remarks at the National Insurance Conference held February 8 in Beijing.

CIRC will also sketch out a series of complementary rules and regulations to strengthen the supervision of foreign insurers, Ma added.

To increase the overall quality of the regulatory officials, Ma said, CIRC plans to bring in a number of experts from overseas.

"If eligible, we can even invite experts to become the CIRC vice-chairperson," he told the participants of the conference.

Senior managing directors from both Chinese and foreign funded insurers attended the conference, which is the first in the country's insurance industry history.

Beijing Lowers Foreign Trade Target

By Zhao Hongyi

Beijing has set its import and export target for the year 2002 at \$12.0-12.3 billion, \$1.2 billion lower than last year. Zhang Mao, the deputy mayor of foreign trade of the municipality made the remarks at the foreign trade and economic development workshop held on February 6 in Beijing.

According to Zhang, the external market where China targets exports will inevitably suffer an economic decline. The worsening will be much heavier than that in the Asian financial crisis in 1997-1998.

Chaoyang Harbor under Construction

By Zhao Hongyi

A huge commodity logistics harbor is under construction along the city's southeastern fourth ring road, expected to become another economic growth area for the municipality and Chaoyang district.

Based on the 1,100 mu (0.7333 hectare) Southeast Commodity Logistic Harbor, which was built in 1994 for the city's imports and exports, another 5,500 mu (3.6667 hectares) have been included in the plan, enlarging the area for further development and providing more services both to foreign trade and domestic logistics.

Beijing Jingtai Industrial (Group) Co. Ltd. and Hong Kong Kerry Group will cooperate in developing the huge logistics harbor, named Chaoyang Harbor. Harbor capacity is planned to deal with 300 thousand standard containers by the year 2005. 6 billion yuan is planned for the first phase of construction to start later this year.

A number of logistic companies, high tech companies, custom and commodity inspection agencies have been established in the harbor.

Air China Joins Hilton HHonors as Travel Partner

By Zhao Hongyi

Air China, China's No.1 international carrier has joined Hilton's HHonors, one of the world's leading guest reward programs, thus becoming a member of the program's family of travel partners. This also marks the first time for Air China to cooperate with international hotel chains in this regard.

Travelers may now earn 800 Air China Companion kilometers for every qualifying stay at participating Hilton hotels around the world, increasing opportunities for travelers to obtain free air tickets from the airline.

Air China Companion kilometers can be earned in addition to Hilton HHonors hotel points, which allows travelers to earn both Points & Miles (TM) for every qualifying stay.

IPR Approval Soars in Beijing

By Zhao Hongyi

Beijing has been confirmed once again as the city in China richest in talent. The number of patents approved last year testifies to the capital's leading position, according to the State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO).

A total of 10,336 applications were submitted for approval last year in Beijing, of which 4,969 won patents and intellectual property rights approval from SIPO, an increase of 46.1% against the year 2000. This figure is the equivalent of the total number of patents approved that year in the rest of the whole nation and beats Shanghai, which came second, by 1,709.

TV Sets Donated to Villagers for Spring Festival



Li Nan (right) with her family's new TV set

Photo by Gloom

By Sun Ming

Thirteen-year-old Li Nan can watch television in her own home at long last. Just three days before Spring Festival, her family received a donation of a 25-inch

color TV. The girl had complained that her family hadn't a TV set, so she was not as well informed as her classmates.

Li Nan's family is not the only lucky one. More than one hun-

dred rural households in Fangshan District also received such donations before Spring Festival. All the TV sets were donated by Beijing citizens, in an activity initiated and organized by the *Beijing Youth Daily*.

On February 8, the newspaper reported that peasants in Sihe Village, Fangshan District are so poor that 40 of the village's 128 families could not afford TV sets.

The newspaper asked Beijing citizens to donate their unused TV sets to Sihe Villager before Spring Festival.

It has become a tradition in recent years throughout the country to watch the special Spring Festival TV programs, especially on the eve of the festival.

According to *Beijing Youth Daily*, during the three-day activity, 165 TV sets were contributed.

One woman who preferred to

remain anonymous bought a new TV set and had it delivered to the newspaper office.

TV manufacturer Kang Jia Group donated 40 new TV sets, from 21 inch to 29 inch.

Dazhong Electrical Appliances not only contributed 40 second-hand TV sets, but also dispatched two technicians to help the villagers install and adjust them.

According to *Beijing Youth Daily*, so many TVs were donated this time that six other villages in Fangshan District as well as Sihe village could receive donations.

"Thanks to the warm-hearted townspeople," said the head of Sihe Village. Now every family of the village has its own TV set.

"I'm so grateful that I hardly know what to say," said Li Nan. On the eve of Spring Festival, she and her family sat around a new 25-inch TV set, making dumplings while watching the Spring Festival special.

No Overtime Pay for Working During Spring Festival? Sue the Boss!

By Ivy Zhang

Tight fisted employers risk being sued after the Spring Festival if they don't pay extra to their employees who work over the weeklong holiday.

The first three days of the Chinese lunar New Year, February 12, 13 and 14, are as national holidays. Those who have to work during those days are entitled to 300% pay by law.

The other four days, from February 15 to 18 are defined as public holidays and those who work then should be paid 200% of their normal wage. Though these regulations are stated in law, some workers are not aware of their rights, or don't expect to receive this extra pay. "Do I get a 300% pay? I don't expect to. I'll be satisfied if my pay is doubled during the holiday," said one fast food restaurant employee. "Last year, I only got a regular pay, not a penny more. Anyway, many people are jobless now and your position can easily be filled if you make a fuss."

For organizations that don't pay extra as required by the regulations, employees can file their complaints to labor supervisory departments.



Photo by Qu Liyan

Lost Video Camera Returned

By Sun Ming

American Mike Bolsinga was overjoyed this week to be reunited with his lost Hitachi digital video camera.

The camera, which Bolsinga lost two weeks ago during a visit to China was returned to him in Seoul, South Korea via international express post.

Bolsinga's video camera was found in a taxi by a young woman called Li Lu, who reported the find to the *Beijing Youth Daily*.

The newspaper published the story and the same afternoon, a hotel rang to say that one of its customers has lost such a camera. The desk clerk of the hotel said the man was very concerned about his loss, and before he left for Seoul, asked the hotel to inform him if the camera was found. When he arrived in Seoul, he E-mailed the hotel again to express his anxiety.

Through the help of the hotel, *Beijing Youth Daily* contacted Bolsinga last Friday. According to the reporter who called him, Bolsinga was very excited at the news and thanked all the people involved in the camera's return.

In an E-mail to *Beijing Youth Daily*, Bolsinga says "Thank you so much for your help! Five of my friends and I, all English teachers in South Korea, visited Beijing for four days from this month. I accidentally left my bag in a taxi. We were very sad that we had lost all the pictures we took of China, so we must thank you and your readers again..."

Li Lu says she is very happy that the camera has been returned to its owner. "Take care of your bag and come to Beijing again," said Li when asked what she wanted to say to Bolsinga.



Dr. Dog Brings Festival Greetings to Mentally Disabled Children

By Sun Ming / Guan Wenhong

Some mentally disabled students celebrated the arrival of the traditional Chinese Spring Festival in an untraditional way on February 8.

The students spent the afternoon playing with three special dogs: Jingjing, Ningning and Amy, who all go by the name Dr. Dog.

The Dr. Dog animal therapy project is sponsored by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and Beijing Huiling, a Chinese non-governmental charity providing community service for people with disabilities.

"The project aims to bring care and love to mentally and physically disabled people through visits of Dr. Dogs," says Grace Ge Gabriel, Director of IFAW China. According to Gabriel, Dr. Dogs can

achieve remarkable therapeutic effects by their interaction with people.

Through playing, feeding and caring for Dr. Dogs, those who suffer from mental disabilities can become more sociable and active and learn to take care of themselves as well as to care for others.

Amazed by the joy that the students were showing while playing with their new animal friends, teachers from Beijing Huiling, said "Never were the children so happy before. Dr. Dogs are happy angels indeed."

Dr. Dogs are selected from healthy pet dogs, pedigree or mixed breed after passing a qualifying examination by a veterinarian surgeon and an IFAW representative. The main qualification is that they display a happy and placid nature.

Photo by Gloom

More Broken Bones This Spring Festival

By Su Wei

This year's Spring Festival has brought fewer reports of health problems related to overeating, but more cases of accidents resulting from various forms of entertainment.

Surgery and orthopaedics wards in many city hospitals report there was an increase in accidents such as fractures and strained ligaments, especially in people aged between 20 and 30.

A nurse at Jishuitan Hospital says during the Spring Festival holiday, some ten people per day came with injuries incurred while skiing, a sport that has seen increased popularity this year.

Meanwhile, the number of people visiting hospitals with heart related illnesses during the festival also rose.

Li Chunsheng, head of Chaoyang Hospital's emergency room, points out that during Spring Festival, old people are so happy to see their family members and friends, they may forget to take regular medicines and stay up playing cards or mah-jong.



Inesa Pleskacheuskaya is a big fan of Peking Opera

China Changes My Life

By Chen Ying

Many foreigners are enthusiastic about Chinese culture and arts. Inesa Pleskacheuskaya, a journalist from Belarus is one.

Inesa was surprised to find her photo in *Beijing Today's* special Spring Festival issue. In the photo, she is holding Spring Festival couplets she had made herself at an activity organized by the Chinese Culture Club. *Beijing Today* spoke with her after she contacted the paper.

"It was my first time to write Chinese characters, and I was surprised that Chinese people could actually read them!" Inesa says she will hang the couplets in her home until she writes new ones for next Spring Festival.

Inesa began her career as a diplomat after graduation from the Belarusian National University with a first class honors degree in philosophy in 1993, when she joined the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

She was made head of the secretariat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 1997, as the youngest female director general in the ministry's history.

She is a passionate traveler, has already visited 20 countries and hopes to visit more in the coming years. "I always wanted to travel to Asia. It was desire, a dream about an unknown and mysterious land," she says.

"And if you have studied philosophy, you will be keen to go to Asia. Eastern philosophy is very different from Western. Western people try to explore the world, and then change the world. Eastern people change themselves after exploring the world."

In October 1999, she visited Beijing for one week for a rou-

tine inspection of the Belarusian Embassy. It was here she met her future husband Mikhail, who was at that time working in the Belarusian Embassy to China. A couple of weeks later Mikhail returned to Belarus, having completed his term in Beijing. They married soon after and Inesa was appointed to the Embassy of Belarus in London.

After having worked in Beijing for six years, her husband felt that China was a land of opportunities, especially for business people. So he came back to Beijing after a short period of time to engage in business.

Inesa made a decision to join him. "It was not easy, because I had prospects of bright career ahead. But I think that to find the right man is much more difficult than to build an excellent career."

She found a job as a journalist, and is currently the only correspondent from her country in China, as Beijing Bureau Chief of the paper 'Sovetskaya Belorussia'.

After living in Beijing for 13 months, Inesa thinks Chinese are the greatest patriots in the world. "Last summer two journalists from my country came to Beijing for the Universiade, and I told them my view. One of them asked me, 'Even more than Americans?' I said 'Of course'. I suggested him to go to Tian'anmen Square to watching the raising of the flag at dawn. He was very impressed and filmed the ceremony to show on Belarusian TV."

Inesa is currently writing a book about China, that looks at history, traditions, culture, family values, medicine and cuisine. "My husband and I hope our future will be as bright as that of China's. And we hope to see the Olympics in 2008 with our own eyes."

Mid-air Rescue

Policeman lift Lin Tiantian to safety
Photo by Qu Liyan

By Chen Ying

Two youngsters were trapped for one hour 15 meters above the ground when a thrill-ride malfunctioned last week.

In something resembling a scene from a movie, thousands of Spring Festival vacationers witnessed the breathtaking rescue in Wangfujing, one of Beijing's busiest business districts.

Gao Xinhua and Liu Tiantian from Tianjing, never imagined just how exciting the ride would turn out before they got on to it. "I would have gone crazy if I had stayed there any longer," said Liu after her rescue.

Gao and Liu had gone on a ride called 'rocket jump' that flings a capsule in which two or three thrill-seekers are securely strapped some 50 meters into the air; kind of a bungee jump in reverse. Sud-

denly, the mechanism that lowers the capsule back to earth became jammed, leaving the pair stranded in mid-air. The capsule tilted 45 degrees to one side after the ride operators tried to lower the equipment manually. Eventually they had to call for emergency assistance.

Firemen provided an extension ladder that the police used to reach Gao and Liu. They released the safety belts and brought the two down. There was loud applause from the crowd of bystanders at the successful completion of the rescue.

The Beijing East Rocket Culture Arts Company, which owns the facility, refunded Gao and Liu's fare, and have reportedly agreed to pay them compensation, however an amount has not yet been agreed on.

‘Lao Wai’ an Insult?

Few aware of foreigners’ hurt national feelings

By Chen Ying

Beijing Today did not expect a fuss over a front-page story last issue. The characters “老外” (lao wai) appeared on a banner in Yuetan Park designed by foreigners to express their best wishes to Chinese in the Year of the Horse. This sparked off a citywide debate.

The phrase “lao wai” is often used by Chinese in daily conversation. Some foreigners wish they’d stop doing it. They suggest “lao wai” is too often employed as a sarcastic, condescending abbreviation of “外国人” (wai guo ren).

When laughing strangers shout at foreigners in the distance, obviously they need urgent re-education, regardless of their choice of words. But taken out of this context, can “lao wai” be considered in and of itself insulting? And if — wrongly or rightly — the phrase upsets foreigners, then should Chinese retire the popular phrase?

Li Xingjian, editor-in-chief of Chinese Standard Dictionary

Many of these words came into being under special historic circumstances. There were few foreigners in China at the beginning of opening and reform at the end of 1970s. At that time, Chinese often surrounded them and watched.

In China, there’s a tradition of using the word “老” (lao) in front of a family name. Thus Chinese dubbed foreigners “老外” (lao wai). The word wasn’t too reverent or serious originally. But along with China’s development and communication with other countries, a growing number of foreigners have come to China. And Chinese aren’t so surprised by foreign people anymore.

Chinese and foreigners have gradually befriended each other. The meaning of words evolves over time. And now it’s very common to say “lao wai” during our daily life. The meaning of the word often embodies an emotion during some spe-



Paul Matulewicz from Poland, Gido Rosler from Germany and their friends send 10,000 greeting cards to ordinary Beijingers during the spring festival

cial period. A word has a derogatory aspect if people speak it with a subjective disrespect. But along with this evolution in the Chinese attitude toward foreigners, the meaning of the word “lao wai” has also changed. It’s now got a kind of friendly, colloquial, easy feeling. People often use it. But it’s still unsuitable in a formal situation.

Gido Rosler, banner designer, student at Capital University of Economics and Business

I asked many foreigners how they feel when Chinese dub them “lao wai”. Eighty percent of foreigners don’t think “lao wai” is a good phrase because many Chinese would not say this word in front of them.

I still remember what happened during the activity my friends and I organized, “Lao wai support the Beijing bid for Olympics Games 2008” last year. Many foreigners

refused to sign the scroll as they thought the phrase “lao wai” doesn’t respect them.

When I told my Chinese friends about foreigners’ reactions to the appellation, most of them were surprised as they don’t think of it as disrespectful.

I think the key lies in a lack of communication between foreigners and Chinese. Although many foreigners live in Beijing, or in China, they just live alone and seldom have contact with local people in their daily life. So they don’t know each other too deeply.

If both sides want to eliminate the misunderstanding, they should make deeper contact, not just on the surface. In terms of Chinese civilization or Chinese people’s habits, I think foreigners should see China through the eyes of the Chinese instead of their own eyes. That’s why I adopted the title in the banner. I

hope more foreigners in Beijing will grow to accept it.

Requested anonymity, Chinese

There are also some words that create controversy in English. For instance, in a lecture at the beginning of the year, President Bush upset Pakistanis with his casual use of the abbreviation ‘Pakis’, widely regarded as a derogatory appellation. It’s just like a few Americans even today might use the word ‘negro’ to describe African-Americans. It’s a kind of discrimination to use these words.

But it’s different in this case. Although I don’t know the true origin of the word “lao wai”, it hasn’t any disrespectful meaning — literally at least. “Lao” means “old” in English. It’s true it can lead to some bad feeling combined with other words in Chinese. But it signals a sort of respect under most

circumstances.

For instance, “师” (shi) means “teacher” in English, but Chinese still add “lao” to it. And “wai” is an abbreviation of “wai guo ren”. So I don’t think “lao wai” has any negative connotation towards foreigners.

D. Christopher Harry, graduate student of Beijing Language and Culture University and freelance translator

Most Chinese find the term “lao wai” funny while most foreigners find it “annoying”.

Just imagine if you lived outside of China and people often laughed or pointed at you, and shouted “Chinese, Chinese”. Clearly, you might find this behavior irritating and unfriendly. Not surprisingly, that is exactly how most foreigners feel in China.

My own extensive research, including surveys in both Chinese and English, demonstrates that the term “lao wai” creates needless cultural conflict and poses a barrier to friendlier and more harmonious relations between Chinese and foreigners.

Most foreigners feel that the term is either too casual, disrespectful or annoying. Almost one-fourth of foreigners I interviewed even feel that the term is an expression of Chinese nationalism.

On the whole, Chinese are very open, friendly and generous toward foreigners. Unfortunately “lao wai” and its usage damages the image of Chinese people among foreigners because it makes Chinese people appear xenophobic and uncivilized. This is because it is considered rude to emphasize that others are “outsiders” in many countries.

I personally feel that one should always treat strangers, especially foreigners, with respect. Most Chinese and foreigners agree, however, that “lao wai” is not a term of respect.

SOUND BITES

“It’s part of who George W. Bush is. He is a very straight-spoken individual. Some of our European friends find it a little disconcerting. But I think the American people like it.”

— **US Vice President Dick Cheney discussing his boss and the ‘axis of evil’**

“There will be no strategic change, but there will be wider use of military means.”

— **Raanan Gissin, adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon over decision to intensify military strikes against Palestinian targets**

“The truth is on my side. That is why I feel superior here (the Hague tribunal), the moral victor. The public will speak up. They are the jury. This tribunal doesn’t have one. War on the territory of Yugoslavia was incited by big western powers. The goal of western envoys was not to bring peace, but their interest was destroying the country and ensuring a new colonialism.”

— **Slobodan Milosevic, former Yugoslav president, in his opening statement to the Hague war crimes tribunal**

By Chen Ying

Your Voice

You’ve read the story. What do you think? Voice welcomes readers to share their views at: newsweek@ynet.com

Next week, Voice will feature opinions on a February 25-27 conference on sex education for adolescents. If you want to get involved in the Voice debate, contact: yingchen@ynet.com

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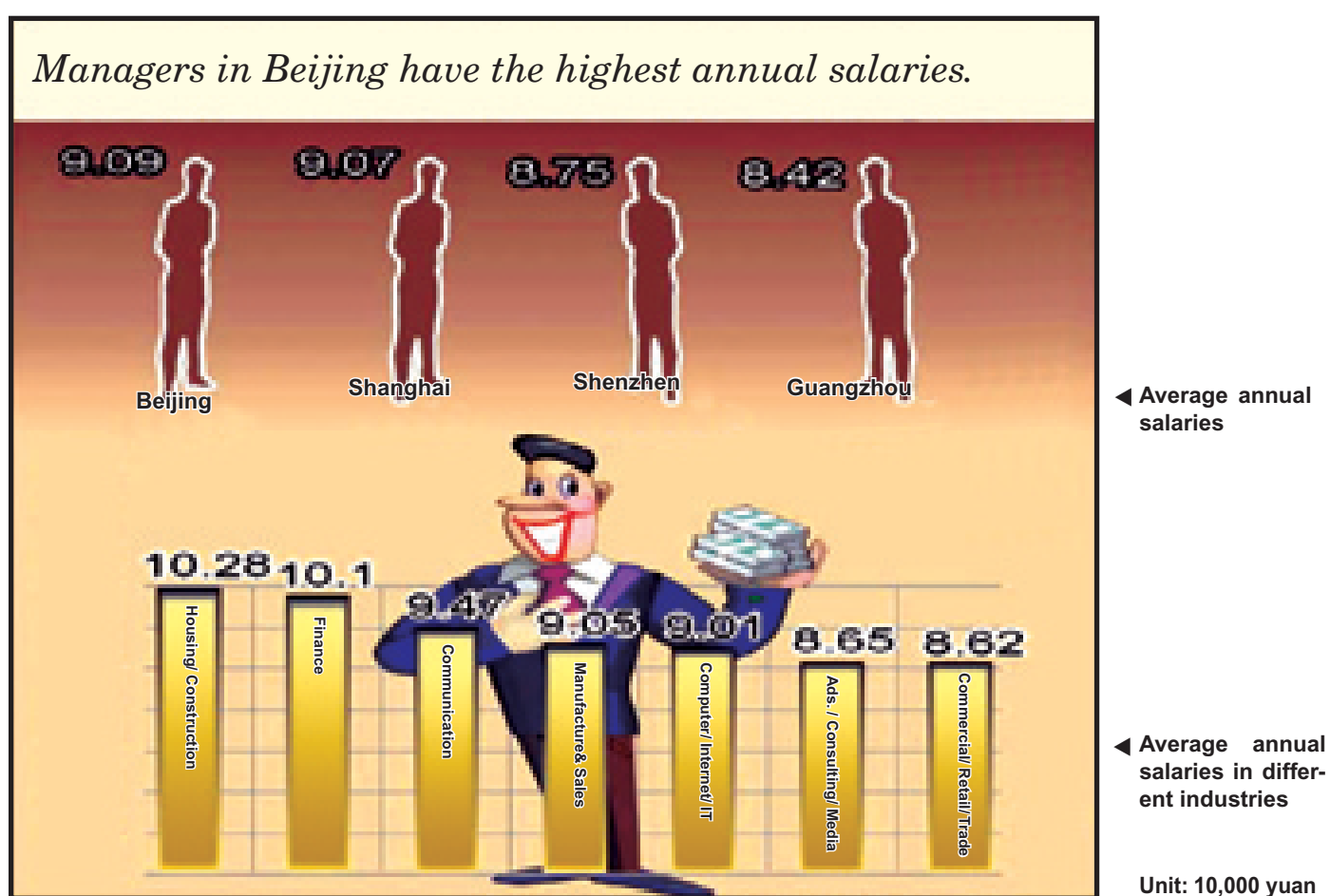
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By Su Wei

Managers Celebrate Increased Salary, Job Satisfaction



What did Chinese managers earn in 2001? How much do they expect to earn this year? What factors determine how much they are paid?

Managers, a national magazine published in Shanghai, has released its managers salary survey for 2001.

By Su Wei

The magazine questioned 2,000 company managers in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen with an average monthly salary of 5,000 yuan or more.

Paid more

Nearly 50% of those surveyed saw their salary increase in 2001, while only 6% took a salary cut. In contrast nearly 20% suffered a pay cut in 2000.

2000 saw a rash of start-up companies in China. But many of these were driven by a desire for quick profits and run by people lacking in management skills and incapable of improving the enterprises operation.

In 2001, the number of start-up companies, especially small and middle-sized ones, decreased. More companies have been engaged in asset restructuring through takeovers or mergers.

As a result, there are a higher percentage of enterprises operating well and the managers of those enterprises have seen their salaries increase.

Lu Feng, a production manager in a kitchen products manufacturing enterprise in Guangzhou has seen his average monthly salary increase from 7,000 in 2000 to 11,500 in 2001. "I do not know how fast my salary has increased in the past year. But I know we have had a lot of orders in the last year."

Satisfied managers

94% of the surveyed managers say they are satisfied with their salaries over the past year. But nearly 20% complained they earned too little in 2000.

The widespread satisfaction may be due to the fact that more managers have become more practical towards their salary demands.

2001 was seen as a severe winter for those engaged in information technology, securities, investment and foreign trade. Meanwhile, managers have also faced competition and challenge from the industries.

But as many managers have become more aware of the impact of the global recession and the state of industry, they have become more realistic in their salary expectations and less hasty in making predictions.

However, many enterprises have highlighted

the importance of salary in encouraging personnel to give full play to their capability.

The enterprises also have realized salary is an important incentive for personnel loyalty and raising work standards.

Xu Jiang, a human resources councilor points out that besides providing life's basic necessities, salary also embodies the enterprises culture. "Only when salaries are true and fair, are people willing to work hard and regard themselves as one part of the enterprise."

All the surveyed managers believe their salary will continue to rise in 2002 by at least 10%. Meanwhile, nearly 30% hope their salary will rise over 20% in 2002.

Salaries higher

Entry to the WTO and the expected consequences this will bring are the main reasons for the optimism. Demand for highly skilled professionals has continued to rise since the entry.

Meanwhile, many foreign human resources companies have sped up efforts to join the domestic market.

Domestic enterprises, especially state-owned ones, have gradually changed methods of personnel payment. "Now, we are paying and rewarding the person who does the job,

not the job itself."

It is generally agreed that increasing salary is an effective way of maintaining and attracting more capable professional personnel, especially those having completed overseas studies.

Therefore, the enterprises are more likely to continue their development and strengthen their competence with those excellent human resources.

Hence, salary increases are preferred in the ranking of effective ways for enterprises to maintain the excellent personnel, followed by training opportunities, housing and so on. Many managers consider increasing salary is more direct and more practical.

Chen Wenpei, an investment manager at an imported car sales agency, is proud of his personal management ability and professional experience handling in the import business. "There is no doubt that a person will earn less than he expects if he is lacking in capability!"

Tenure pays off

Among the surveyed managers who have been in a managerial position for one year or less, nearly 47% earn an annual after-tax salary of less than 60,000 yuan, followed by 33% on 60,000 to 80,000 yuan.

Only 11% earn an annual salary between 80,000 and 100,000 yuan and 9% receive over 100,000 yuan.

In contrast, for managers who have been in the position for four or five years, 36% earn an annual after-tax salary of more than 100,000 yuan, followed by 24% on 80,000 to 100,000 yuan. Only 21% earn between 60,000 and 80,000 yuan and 18% less than 60,000 yuan.

It seems there is conflict between the surveyed result and the common idea.

Many people believe that the longer someone stays in the same position, the more likely their colleagues and bosses might consider they may lack flexibility and more shortcomings will be discovered.

In fact, human resources managers agree that with a comparatively longer period in one position, managers have the opportunity to improve their professional skills.

Meanwhile, managers who have remained in the same position for a long time usually have a better relationship with their bosses, which is a key factor in obtaining a higher salary.

Spring Festival Special Survey

New Clothes Still Special for Spring Festival

Nearly 60% of Beijingers say they purchased new clothes for this year's Spring Festival, suggesting people still value this tradition, despite the fact that new clothes are these days not nearly such a rarity for most.

Sources from Data Sea and Beijing Youth Daily also reveal that for Beijinger's young and old, wearing new clothes remains an important tradition to mark the Spring Festival.

Among 43% of the surveyed buying new clothes especially for the Spring Festival, 59% of the surveyed are aged below 19 compared with 25% aged above 50.

Nearly 70% of Beijingers bought their new clothes for the festival in large shopping malls.

It may be due to the fact that many street clothes stalls had closed for the festival.

In contrast, the large shopping malls have promoted a series of sales strategies. People have a variety of choices for their favorite style and brands, or they can have clothes tailored at certain counters.

The difference in numbers of women and men buying new clothes for the festival is less than 10%.

It is consistent with the quick sale of Chinese traditional clothes, though it was once commonly held that there is little profit to be had in the men's clothes market. Times have clearly changed and these days, men too are interested in dressing up and looking good.

New Year Eve Dinner at Home Still Preferred

75% of the surveyed Beijingers ate the New Year's Eve dinner at home, though all agreed that some sort of special New Year dinner is necessary for the Spring Festival.

For those dining at home, having all the family members together and enjoying the atmosphere of the family reunion was more important.

They say it is not a matter of money but are afraid they may not feel the family warmth at a noisy restaurant.

Most of those dining at restaurants spend between 200 and 500 yuan. But about 14% spend over 800 yuan.

It suggests that with the improved living standards, people do not care about spending money on eating, especially at Spring Festival time.

For them, the important thing is that everyone is happy to eat dishes at a restaurant, which are different from home-made. "We only have Spring Festival once a year. Why shouldn't the whole family have a taste of some delicious food?"

Besides dishes, alcohol is also necessary for the New Year Eve dinner, as well as the whole festival. 29% of those surveyed agree that people will definitely drink more alcohol during the festival.

Forty-one percent of those have a university degree. In contrast only 25% have junior middle school education.

This suggests that alcohol is seen as an important part of celebrating festivals. It is very common that people drink alcohol together at such times.

People regard it as a component of Chinese culture. Drinking alcohol can highlight the joyous atmosphere of the festival.

Temple Fairs Popular During Spring Festival

62% of the surveyed Beijingers went to temple fairs during the Spring Festival holiday to watch acrobatics, listen to cross talks, eat tasty national snacks and buy folk handicrafts such as rattle-drums.

49% of those going to temple fairs are young people less than 20 years old. They are mainly attracted by the snacks and the folk handicrafts and toys at the temple fairs.

For people above 40 years old, they say they just want to see and experience the jolly environment. The entertainment at the temple fairs may remind them of their childhood.

Besides going to temple fairs, 50% of Beijingers also spent the holiday playing chess and mahjong or traveling with family members. 30% went to cinemas and 24% did physical exercise at sports centers.

Temple Fair Tour



Foreigners watching shadow puppet performance at Longtanhu Temple Fair.
Photo by Ding Chengdong

By Yvonne Gluyas

On Tuesday February 12, the first day of the Year of the Horse, 130 members of the Chinese Culture Club met for the Lunar New Year outing to three of Beijing's popular temple fairs.

The ancient custom of holding temple fairs to offer sacrifices at New Year has developed into a modern five-day festival, with fun-

filled hours of food, dance performances, games and souvenir stalls.

For many of the participants, people from all around the globe, this was the first visit to a temple fair. From senior citizens to small children, from joint venture executives and diplomats to students and foreign experts, we were a mixed group with just one thought in mind - to experience this exciting part of Beijing's Spring Festival celebration.

Beginning at Tai Miao, the Ancestral Temple east of the Forbidden City, we paused to watch

a group of older Chinese women stilt walking and dancing, accompanied by a colorful band of musicians playing on traditional instruments, including the sheng and suona.

The musicians were dressed in gold silk garments trimmed with red, and the women dancers, with bright pink flowers in their hair, wore black embroidered aprons over their traditional costumes.

Taking our front-row seats on the huge area in front of the ancestral temple, we had a great

view of the re-enactment of imperial ceremonies, including a royal wedding.

Buses next took us to the Taoist White Cloud (Baiyunguan) Temple in the southwest of Beijing, where crowds of worshippers burnt incense and thousands of visitors, many dressed in old-style Chinese clothing, jostled to look at the displays and entertainment.

Taoism is still regularly practiced here, and the chanting crowds queued up to perform religious rituals. Priests carried out Taoist ceremonies and the entire scene was one of devout worship intermingled with handcraft and snack stalls.

Moving on to Chongwenmen District, our final stop of the day was Dragon Lake (Longtanhu) temple fair, the largest in Beijing.

Here we joined local families enjoying lion dances and puppet shows, folk art and theatre, feeding birds, throwing hoops over prizes, strolling along the lake, eating tasty food, and admiring the red lanterns and decorations that softly blew in the breeze and delighted everyone.

Temple fairs are a great opportunity to try out traditional snacks,

and along with the usual everyday food items such as jian bing pancakes and tang hulu, or toffee-covered fruit on a stick, we were offered glutinous rice dumplings, and Beijing New Year cake, deep fried and dipped in sugar.

Games of chance were popular with children and the young at heart. For just a few yuan, you are given an armful of large bamboo hoops to throw over a selection of prizes, including toy cars, tea-sets and live rabbits in cages!

My son was most anxious to win a new pet, but luckily his aim was not as good as he thought. As a consolation, after buying him a big windmill made from colored paper and bamboo, we stopped to watch hundreds of birds being fed by visitors, some even perched on the arms and heads of those feeding them grain from small paper bags.

By the end of the day our group of one hundred or so foreign visitors, of all ages and nationalities, agreed that Spring Festival in Beijing is a wonderful opportunity to explore both ancient and modern customs, and we look forward to next year's outing!



Members of the Chinese Culture Club pose for photos at Tian'anmen Square
Photo by Yvonne Gluyas



Photo by Qu Liyan

By Ivy Zhang

Another Spring Festival has come and gone and most people are back at work again.

On one hand, Beijing residents reinterpreted the centuries old traditional holiday by following new fashions, wearing traditional dress, or posing for photos in studios in front of auspicious backdrops, such as traditional style red gates.

On the other hand, people celebrated the week long Lunar New Year in all kinds of untraditional ways, shrugging off the old superstitious taboos in the Year of the Horse.

Get married for true love

The Year of the Horse is a special year. According to the folk custom, the Year of the Horse is a year of widows or a year of blindness, and not an auspicious year for marriage.

But many young people are paying no heed to this superstition.

On February 14, Valentine's Day and the third day of the New Year, photo studios in Beijing were full of young couples who had come to take wedding photos.

At Luowei photo studio in Sun Dong An Plaza, the newlyweds' faces were glowing.

"Today is a special day to take photos," Miss Chen says. "We love each other

and we both think it's time to get married. Even our parents haven't objected, though everybody knows the old saying about not marrying during a horse year."

Eight traditional gifts replaced

According to one old custom, married women should visit their parents on the sixth day of the New Year.

The first five days were reserved for staying home or calling on the husband's family. They should bring with them eight kinds of gifts, including pork, eggs, tea and fine dried noodles.

Nowadays, the daughter and son-in-law usually visit the wife's parents on the second day of the New Year, and they take anything they like as gifts.

"We don't prepare anything special for my parents," Ms. Qin, a clerk in a local company says, "A fruit basket and couple of boxes of tea maybe. We buy them whatever they need and our visit is just for family reunion."

Ms. Si who works at a research institute says she always go to parents' home empty-handed but goes back laden down with presents. "My parents are happy to see us back and they are more happy to give me things instead," she says.

No buying shoes taboo fails to kill shoe business

Not buying shoes before January 15 of the Chinese lunar year is one of the old customs in Beijing, and results from the similarity in the pronunciation of the word for shoes and for evil in Chinese.

Traditionally, words identified as unlucky, "broken", "death", "sick", "lose" and "poor" for instance, are avoided during the Spring Festival. Don't even mention the "evil" that's possible to be bought home along with the shoes!

In large shopping malls, the Spring Festival is prime time for all businesses and the shoe business is no exception.

In Cuiwei department store in the west of Beijing, many people are trying on shoes. "As it's a warm winter and spring is coming, I've been doing nothing but taking my family to buy shoes these days. None of my family cares about the old taboo," says Mr. Zhang, accompanying his wife to buy shoes.

Scissors snipping at tailor's shop

According to the old tradition, Beijingers should get new clothes and dishes ready before New Year's Day. Scissors or knives should not be used during the first days of the year, otherwise the family would have bad luck. Many tailor's shops closed for the whole month.

In the early morning of the second day of the New Year, Mr. Yue at Daxin tailor's shop is busy at sizing and cutting a cloth for a traditional outfit.

When asked about the taboo concerning the use of scissors, he says with a big smile, "These are modern times. Such old customs have been abolished for a long time at our shop. We are quite busy these days."

"In the past, tailors usually didn't work for the sake of the old tradition, and the lack of customers," the assistant manager of Daxin tailor's shop says. "But this year, the fashion of wearing Chinese traditional dress has brought in much more business and nobody pays attention to the old taboo. The sales volume in our shop is much higher than the same period last year."

Hair cut causes death of uncle?

The most deep-rooted taboo for the first month of the Chinese New Year concerns haircuts. It used to be said that one's maternal uncle would die if you had your hair cut during the first month of the New Year.

However, fewer and fewer Beijingers pay attention to this superstition these days. On the first and second day of the New Year, Silian hair salon at Wangfujing had some 100 customers each day, around half the number on normal days.

Silian opens during Spring Festival every year. In the past, customers, older people in particular, would come to have their hair styled or washed, but not to get a haircut, a staff member says.

"I used to pay attention to the old customs. But this year I've been working too hard and haven't had time to get my hair done before the Spring Festival," one of the customers, a Ms. Qi says. "I have time in the holiday and there are fewer people in the hair salon."

Donate blood on any day

The old taboo against shedding blood

or sustaining any kind of injury on the first day of the Chinese New Year has been challenged this year. According to the Beijing Blood Center, over 1,300 people donated blood during the holiday week, double the figure of last year.

On the first day of the Chinese New Year, a total of 260 people donated blood at 10 blood stations at temple fairs and in key business districts. Most donors were under the age of 25.

One couple, Zhang Wenji and his wife Ji Guangyu, both in their late thirties, were the eldest blood donors at Longtan temple fair.

"We are in the new century and should be free from the restraints of old customs. There are many people in the society who need blood. I feel happy to help others. Maybe one of my family would also need such help someday."



Photo by Qu Liyan



Photo by Cui Hao

Old Customs Bite the Dust in Year of Horse



Xu Wen always gets excited when looking at her photos taken at the Universal Studios, Japan

Illusions

Lost in World of Film

By Zhu Lin

Like many young women, Xu Wen feels embarrassed if she steps outdoors without being properly made up. But it is exactly when she is not made up that the conflicts inherent in youth spread across her 27-year-old face. Xu graduated from the Department of Film Studies of Japan's Nagoya University last year. After returning to Beijing, she worked for just three months in a film company before resigning.

Xu's mouth emits a torrent of words that spark before her face, accompanied by lively gestures. Her listeners are dumbstruck by the speed of the utterances, only to sigh at their quick disappearance. Xu's sensitivity and penetrating vision make her perfectly suited to working with film, even if at present her cherished dream lies in tatters beside the rest of her young memories.

"I need a way to express myself"

Xu served as a class monitor at high school, and was a successful student. Her classmates would often turn to her for advice, but few would listen to her inner feelings and concerns as most thought she was strong and able to look after herself. She gradually got into the habit of keeping her true feelings to herself, and felt she no longer possessed the words to express her heart. "But I'm anxious to express myself," she grabbed at the air as if trying to catch something.

Souls burning to express their inner flames are destined to flirt with the arts. For Xu the art of film is quite separate from that of language. She has long been seduced by the broad dimensions and inclusive character of film.

Film studies proved to be a far cry from easy direction for Xu however. She was born into a typical scientist's family. Her grandfather graduated from Beijing University and half of her family members are lecturers or assistant professors. Holding traditional concepts of family honor and ties, her parents wanted her to study science and stay at home. They didn't support her idea to study the arts; neither did they want her to study in Japan.

When she was a little girl, Xu's grandmother always told her, "Everyone of us needs 500 years of Buddhist practice to become a person. It's not easy to have such a fortunate lot!" Clearly bearing that in mind, Xu cherishes every minute of her life, snatching every moment to gain all kinds of experience. "I knew studying abroad

was full of hardship, but I had to go to get a feel for another kind of life!"

Plunging into film

Xu began to study at Nagoya University in October, 1998, preparing for the entrance examinations of the graduate program. Before going to Japan, she graduated from the Japanese Department of Beijing Foreign Languages Institute and intended to read Japanese literature at Nagoya University. But she couldn't forget her dream of studying film.

Once she found out that Professor Peter B. High in the Japanese Literature Department taught film studies, she went to ask him about her plan. "How's that possible?" said Professor High. "Your study background isn't related to film." The truth was that Xu hadn't picked up even basic film knowledge in Chinese, let alone in Japanese. But she insisted on trying. At last Professor High made a compromise, "Give me a specific study plan. If that looks reasonable, I'll accept you into the program of Film Studies."

The following two months were a nightmare. Xu studied in the library for at least nine hours everyday besides attending lectures. Her university library did not stock enough books relating to film, so she had to go to other universities. Night buses were half the price of day buses, so she often arrived at 6 am. With a cup of coffee at hand, she had to sit in a nearby McDonalds, waiting for two hours and not daring to fall asleep. Textbooks cost a fortune in Japan, so in the afternoons, she would hop onto another bus to a bookstore to buy second-hand books.

She only fell asleep once in the library. For three hours she slept on a desk. "When I woke up, I almost wanted to beat myself to death for the wasted time!" She made a joke of the incident, but a trace of bitterness appeared at the corner of her mouth, "Damn! Three hours! Three hours! My God!"

Under great pressure from study and money problems she became terribly sick with bulimia in November. She knew her stomach was full, but her mind instructed her to eat and eat. She couldn't control herself. All she could do was force herself to throw up after eating. "I often bought a piece of cake in the evening and told myself to keep it for the next morning. But every



▲ Xu said she didn't know what money meant before going to Japan

▼ "Sorry, mate! Got a light?"



Photos by Jacky



Saying good-bye to her pet before going to Japan to spend this year's Spring Festival

time I ate it during the evening before going to bed." After half a minute of silence, she lit a cigarette and smoked voraciously.

Xu said she wanted to try and forget such a painful period in her life. Anyway, she turned in her first study plan to Professor High. He said it wasn't even written in fluent Japanese, but two months later, he finally accepted her onto the course, "I can see that you've made astonishingly rapid progress," he said. Three years later, Xu became the first foreign master student to graduate from the Department of Film Studies of Nagoya University.

From celebration of youth to funeral of youth

People who meet Xu for the first time notice her natural exaggeration melts in each of her subtle gestures and expressions. The exaggeration is powerful enough to stab into the boredom of life and can be only found in young women like her. Maybe she knows that, so she especially cherishes her youth.

Before graduating from the Beijing Foreign Languages Institute, she and three of her friends decided to hold an exhibition in memory of their four years in college. "Once you get an idea rolling, you will find friends around you thinking the same," Xu said excitedly. They designed exquisite wooden tables and chairs, and elegant lamps with poems written on their paper. With everything ready, they suddenly remembered they hadn't found a place to hold the exhibition. The cheapest rent of a small gallery was 3,000 yuan per day, which they could nowhere nearly afford.

Sakai, the owner of a Japanese restaurant near her college lent a hand. He understood the students' desire to celebrate their memories of youth and decided to lend his restaurant to them. The exhibition successfully attracted their friends, schoolmates and passers-by for two days. Sakai didn't ask for any money. "You don't know how much I thank you!" said Xu to him, "I owe you for my whole life!"

At that time, Xu believed she could fulfill her dreams if she tried hard enough. Now however she has lost all faith, "The biggest failure of education lies in encouraging kids to believe their wishes can come to truth if they dedicate enough time and effort!" she complained.

Last September, the last month of her time studying abroad, Xu took the train from Nagoya to Osa-

ka to see Cats, the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical. When the musical finished, the heavens opened. Xu and her friends dashed to the station through the rain in their long dresses to get the last train home. She feels the scene happened a long time ago. "The feeling is as faraway as distant music!" At that time, she regarded it as the memory of her time studying abroad. "I think it should be called the 'remembrance of my youth'," she said.

Waiting to fulfill her film dream

Generally speaking, Chinese students who study overseas have a choice of two promising future career paths if they come back after graduation. The first is to work for a prestigious company or institute; the second is to establish their own company. "I don't belong to either of them!" Xu laughed at herself. She only considered working in the film industry when she came back to Beijing in late September last year.

She was assigned to take charge of an avant-garde film project in one of the biggest film producing companies in Beijing. After giving it her all, she handed in her resignation to the boss after three months. She couldn't bear the bureaucracy or politics in the company.

Now she stays at home but often feels down. Every night she hangs around with friends, going to bars until two or three o'clock in the morning. Asked why she likes to go out at night, she said, "I need an escape route. Besides, I think people are more real at night."

Although there are a lot of young people like her who don't want to find a formal job, she can't ignore the pressure from society and her parents, "I couldn't cope if I didn't smoke." She knows she wants to get into the circle of independent directors and producers, or make a movie from private means. "I'm not confident enough about my choice, and I can't ignore other people's worries for me," she frowned. That's the problem: she doesn't have enough courage.

For most people, especially her family, working in film is not a stable job: "Maybe I shouldn't have studied film. However, I love it too much." She fell into silence. Numerous Chinese young people today are facing the same problem. Most of them usually keep silent, waiting for the struggles and contradictions to gradually die out together with their youthful passion. Then their real career in society kicks off.

Watchtowers

Guard Local Fortunes

By Miao Yajie

“Over 1,000 century-old watchtowers rise in various postures above the west side of the Pearl River Delta. Looking from a distance, the high-rising watchtowers change the traditional level and smooth horizon of China's countryside. The rising and falling makes the horizon beautiful. Looking from nearby, the residential houses in western styles offer people a completely new experience, as if in a foreign country.”

Zhang Guoxiong, a researcher on the Kaiping watchtowers, made the above comments about the watchtowers in Kaiping, southwest of Guangzhou, the capital city of Guangdong province last April in *Chinese National Geography*. It was the first ever introduction of this fusion of Chinese and western styles of architecture in China's domestic media. Along with pictures taken by photographer Li Yuxiang, the humane spirit embodied in these defense buildings emerges, and the watchtowers as a whole have aroused great attention from home and abroad.

Fighting bandits and floods

A well-known idiom in Chinese states (人心不古), meaning that the public morality is no longer what it used to be. Memory and nostalgia turn the old times into a Utopia: the Kaiping watchtowers provide evidence to the contrary however.

Kaiping is famous for three things: overseas Chinese, watchtowers, and western-style houses.

The large numbers of watchtowers that appeared in Kaiping can be attributed to the local social and natural environment of the time.

Before the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Kaiping stood at an intersection between Xinhui, Enping, and Xinxing counties, none of which fully controlled the area, resulting in bad public order. Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) troops began to garrison at Kaiping in 1573. In 1649 of the Qing Dynasty, Kaiping was set up as a county. However, the social order people expected didn't arrive: bandits rested at night and came out in the daytime, plundering all around. Meanwhile, every summer and autumn, the sea tides, typhoons and storms always brought floods, submerging the villages in the plateau area.

Watchtowers started to rise over the landscape to protect against the perils of bandits and floods. The oldest watchtower named 'Yalong Lou' was built in 1650, and saved villagers from a devastating flood in 1884. Even in the 1960's, people still occupied the watchtowers to escape the floods. The people in the plateau area of Kaiping share a deep affection towards the watchtowers. No wonder the more than three-hundred-year-old Yalong watchtower has been completely preserved till today.

After the Opium War (1840), as population increased, people suffered from a lack of land; on the other hand, the gold rush and over-night millionaires in the U.S., Canada, and Australia attracted Kaiping people to make their fortunes in these countries. Unfortunately the social order in Kaiping only deteriorated with the return of the rich overseas Chinese.

Although the watchtowers come in all kinds of shapes and postures, they all share a range of common characteristics. Kaiping watchtowers usually stand with four or five stories (some rise as high as seven or eight stories, with



Ruishi Lou



Concrete-sculpted window frame



Turret on Huaixing ou (淮兴楼)

Unnamed watchtower in Xiangang

Photos by Li Yuxiang

the highest at nine stories). Each story contains several windows and the door occupies the front middle of the first floor. The door and windows are made of steel. As for the construction materials, watchtowers appear in stone, brick, rammed earth, and reinforced concrete.

Watchtowers do not only form an essential element in local Kaiping architecture, but also stand as an important symbol of a village. A saying has grown up that goes: "Where there is no watchtower, there is no village." At least one, or more than ten watchtowers are the first eye-catching landmarks of any village in the Kaiping area. The huge number of the watchtowers, the variety of the styles, the elaboration of the craftsmanship, all make those buildings a rare example in China's existing native architecture.

Kaiping used to boast around 5,600 watchtowers; now over 1,400 still exist, spreading throughout the 15 towns of Kaiping city, especially in Tangkou, Chikan, Baihe, Changsha, Chishui, and Xiangang. And the most elaborate watchtowers are in Xiangang, which boasts the most splendid tower.

No.1 watchtower in Kaiping

Ruishi Lou (瑞石楼) is located in Jinjiangli village, 1.2km southwest of Xiangang town. Surrounded by a dense bamboo forest, and accompanied by two other buildings to its west, Ruishi Lou, altogether nine stories, is the highest and most magnificent watchtower in Kaiping.

The owner of the building Huang Bixiu, styled Ruishi, ran a banking house in Hong Kong. He spared no cost in protecting his parents back home, and started constructing this solid defense in 1923, finishing three years later.

Covering an area of 92 square meters, the building was made of reinforced concrete. Actually, all the raw materials came from Hong Kong. The first floor is a living room, and on every floor from the second to sixth stories there is a parlor, bathroom, kitchen, and two bedrooms. The inner arrangements basically follow the Guangdong and Guangxi (south of the Five Ridges 岭南) tradition, but the outside appearance and details reveal a strong western influence.

The combination of the colonnades and terrace from sixth to ninth floor used elements from western churches of the Middle Ages. The four corners were adopted from the western churches' turret. The arched roof was Byzantine in style. In the middle of the terrace on the eighth floor stands an enclosed pavilion, and the arched roof on the ninth floor appears more Roman in style.

Meanwhile, the owner of the building didn't forget to add some Chinese traditional architectural elements, such as on the design of the window frame, the window transom, the outside wall and concrete sculptures.

Heading for world heritage

After already publishing 15 black-and-white photo albums under a name reputed in the market Old Houses Series, photographer Li Yuxiang said that since all the other books of this series were pure native Chinese, this Chinese and western mixture of architecture was not his first choice. Later on, he thought that Kaiping's combined architecture was not a unique phenomenon in China: Harbin, Qingdao, Yantai, and Shanghai are all famous for their architecture combining one or more foreign culture elements. He was looking for the most typical example, and finally decided on Kaiping. "I hope to protect something valuable: to protect everything is not realistic, but we have been able at least to protect part of the most valuable," said Li.

The Kaiping Municipal government has enthusiastically followed the endeavors of Li and others. A special Kaiping Watchtower Office has been set up, and a group of individuals along with experts has finished a rough survey of the watchtowers. A symposium on Kaiping watchtowers is going to be held soon. Moreover, the municipal government is busily preparing for the towers to be listed as a World Heritage site of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Large-scale, in-depth research will undoubtedly shed more light on the watchtowers, but are there any missing details for the time being? Large knowledge gaps exist as to the people who used the towers and details of their lives. Li Yuxiang, the photographer, once found a girl's notebook in the bedroom of one of the watchtowers. "It is very interesting: one could find out lots about the social background of the people around those watchtowers," said Li.

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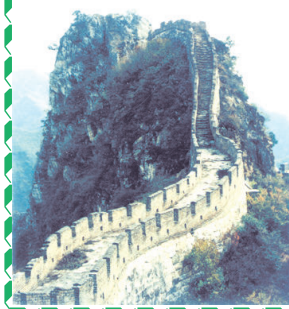
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Finding Truth Drowned in History

By Shi Xinyu

“We know we are not capable enough to make any judgment on Lao She's death, but what we intended to do and what we are doing now is to try to approach the core facts as closely as possible.” So says Zheng Shi in *Memory of Taiping Lake - the Death of Lao She*, a book recording the events that happened in the few days before and after Lao She's death. Co-authored with Zheng Shi's husband, Fu Guangming, the book was published in July 2001 by Hai Tian Publishing House.

Lao She, crowned as “one of the best storytellers in China” and as the “People's Artist”, was found drowned in Taiping Lake (太平湖 near the present Jishuitan Subway Station, now buried after the city's reconstruction) in Beijing on August 24, 1966, the year the Cultural Revolution began. People cremated his body shortly after and no ashes were ever recovered.

“All in a sudden, this man disappeared into thin air, not even leaving any ashes behind. It seemed like the thick fog of history opening its mouth and swallowing this man into eternal darkness,” write the authors in the book.

Zheng Shi and Fu Guangming set out in 1993 to find the truth through interviewing people connected to the great man. In the following eight years, they interviewed more than 20 individuals, including Lao She's family, some celebrities who suffered from the violence that occurred on August 23, 1966, the day before Lao She's death, and some Red Guards involved in the August 23 Affair.

Actually history blurs in the different, sometimes even contradictory, stories narrated by the various interviewees. Thus the truth of Lao She's death has become more complicated and confusing, finally to be lost in their voices. In the chaos of all kinds of sounds, the only truth is the extreme depression people experienced in that turbulent time.

An investigation of Lao She's “abnormal death” in the form of interviews with people connected to the events that took place in the early days of the Cultural Revolution.

Memory of Taiping Lake

- the Death of Lao She

《太平湖的记忆—老舍之死》

By Zheng Shi and Fu Guangming

郑实 傅光明

Published by Hai Tian Publishing House in July, 2001

Price: RMB19.8



The last picture of Lao She, taken with his granddaughter



Photo by Wang Zhenlong

Extracts from Memory of Taiping Lake—the Death of Lao She

“His death is a result of necessity.”

—Shu Yi, Lao She's son, said at the site of Taiping Lake on June 26, 1993.

“Chao Ming once went to my

home to apologize.”

—Shu Yi, said in the reception room of the China Literature Institute on April 11, 2001.

“Many people committed suicide at that time, and Lao She is just someone who owns some fame.”

—Chao Ming, the person who disclosed to the Red Guards that Lao She earned US Dollars by selling the copyright of his works to some US bookmen in the August 23 Affair, said at home, on April 7, 1995

“Lao She beat the Red Guards (红卫兵), he is a counter-revolutionary, seize him!”

—Hao Ran, a witness to the August 23 Affair, vice-director of the Revolutionary Committee of Beijing Literary and Art Association at the time, recited the words from memory at home, on March 24, 2000.

“He (Lao She) did not die at the Confucius Temple because I gave the order to send him back earlier.”

—Ge Xianting, a witness to the August 23 Affair, the vice-director of the Preparatory Committee of the Beijing Cultural Bureau at the time, said when interviewed together with Wang Songsheng.

“Why Mr. Lao She did not try to escape the Red Guards is an enigma till now.”

—Cao Feiya, a witness to the August 23 Affair, a senior employee of the Beijing Literary and Art Association at the time, said at home on April 1, 1994.

“Lao She was totally naive regarding politics and he did not think much about the political system.”

—Lin Jinlan, a victim and witness to the August 23 Affair, a famous writer of the time, said at home on December 16, 1998

“Even till now, still no one knows

Brief Introduction To Lao She

Lao She 老舍 (1899~1966), the pseudonym of Shu Qingchun 舒庆春, is a famous Chinese novelist and dramatist.

As a native born Beijinger, most of Lao She's works were sourced from Beijing folk life. He excelled in telling stories. Some critics have said Lao She was the Mark Twain of China because of his unusual insight into the subtle nuances of people. Summing up all his works, he wrote at least eight million Chinese characters in his lifetime and these works have been translated into more than 20 languages.

Lao She was among the first intellectuals to die in the early days of the Cultural Revolution that rocked China from 1966 to 1976. He was found drowned in Taiping Lake on August 24, 1966, the day after being humiliated both physically and mentally by some teenage Red Guards.

Sacrifice 《牺牲》

He was of medium height, neither fat nor thin, his frame being just the right size on which to hang the suit of foreign clothes, which he was under oath to wear. To top off his ingot-shaped head, there was duly grown a mop of black hair, oiled and brushed, again in an over-exercised sense of duty.

There he was, eyeing himself in the mirror, throwing his glances back and forth, as if appreciating his own beauty. But he looked odd to me. He had his back to the sun so that the middle and concave portion of his face appeared somewhat dark. Every time my eyes rested on this dark and low spot on his physiognomy I hastened to turn and look out of the window to see if it had started clouding up. This doctor fellow even made people suspicious of the beautiful day that it was. He was a funny fellow.

Abstracts from *Sacrifice* 《牺牲》, a short story by Lao She, translated into English by George Kao as “Dr.Mao” and published in the book *Chinese Wit and Humor* by Sterling Publishing, New York, 1946.

time, said at home on January 25, 1994.

“Normally, a drowned person should be lying on the surface of the water, but Lao She's body was strangely standing in the lake. It seemed some heavy things had been bound to his feet.”

—Sheng Zhanli, a witness to the body of Lao She in Taiping Lake, said on January 24, 2000.

“I have been wronged all the time for the death of Lao She.”

—Hou Wenzheng, the said organizer of the August 23 Affair, said in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, on July 28, 2000.

“It was me who salvaged Lao She's body from Taiping Lake.”

—Hao Xiru, the policeman of North Taipingzhuang police station at the time, said at home on December 23, 2000.

“It was me who led those Red Guards from No. 8 Middle School to the Beijing Literary and Art Association at the time. But I did not lay a single finger on Lao She from the beginning to the end.”

—“She”, who refused to reveal her name, said at home on January 9, 2001. (Translated by Shi Xinyu)



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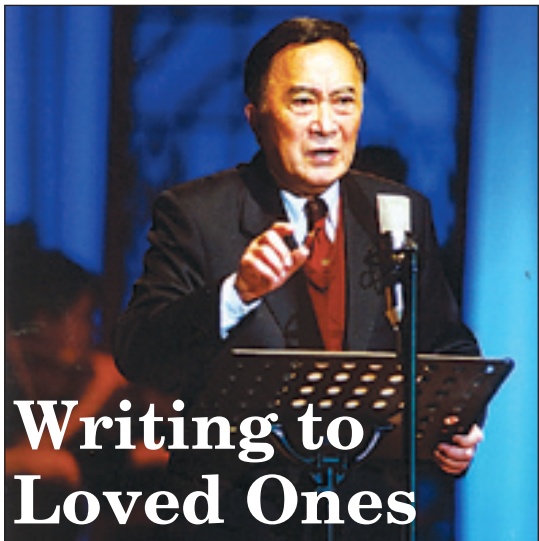
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Writing to Loved Ones

Artist Sun Daolin during the recital Photo by Cui Jun
By Zhao Pu

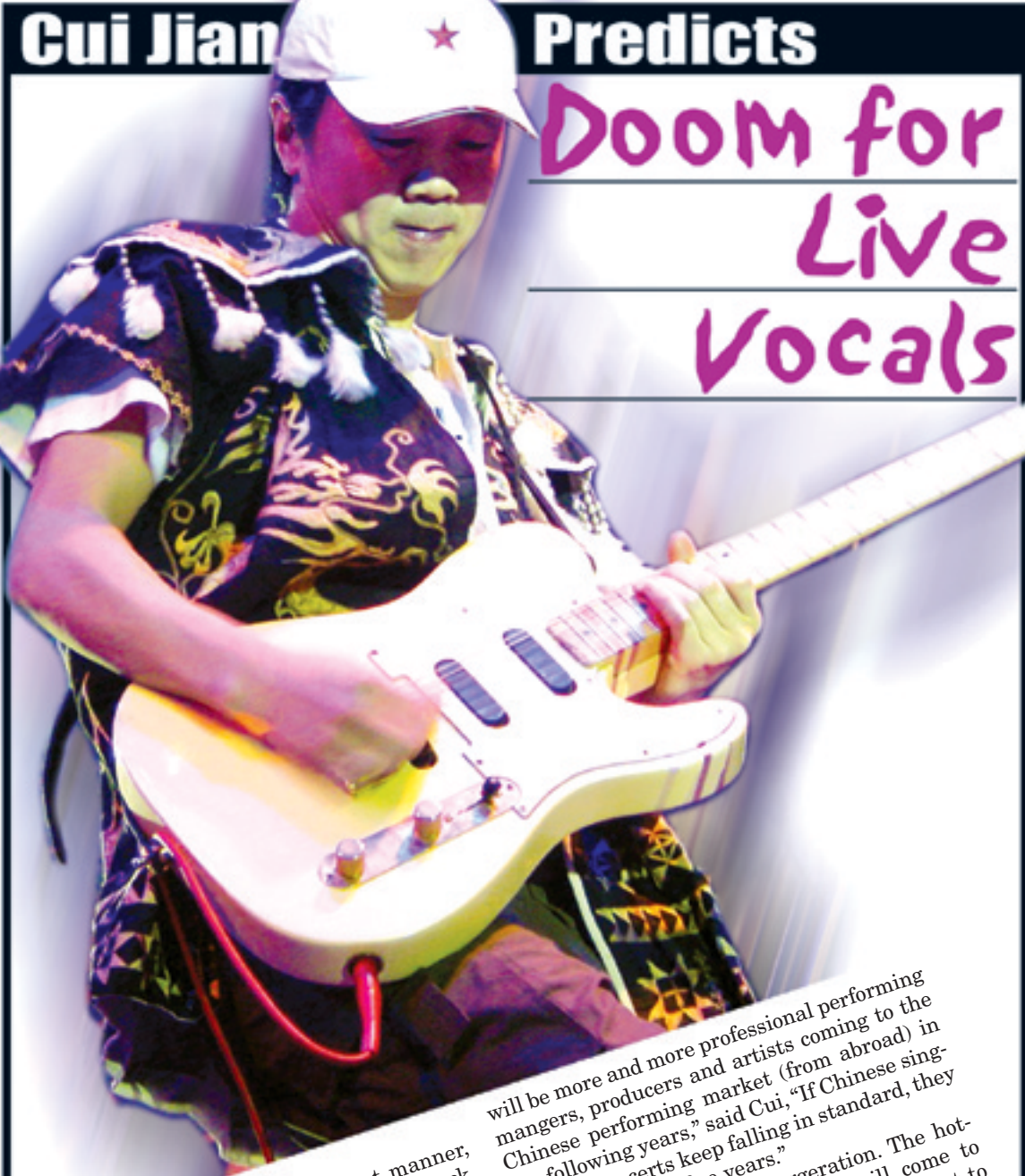
A presentation of classical letters named Recital of Classic Letters by Theatrical Artists sparked off family affection and love on Sunday at the Forbidden City Concert Hall, at a time when a hand-written letter from a son, a lover or a friend has become an extravagant hope.

The performance on February 17 presented 11 classical letters by Chinese and foreign celebrities, and four letters by ordinary people selected from solicited contributions of family letters.

All of the letters were dedicated to lovers and family members—*To My Immortal Beloved* by Ludwig van Beethoven to his lover; two love letters between Karl Marx and his wife Jenny von Westphalen; letter from famous Chinese translator Fu Lei to his pianist son Fu Cong; a letter from a mother to her daughter who had conquered congenital weakness; and a letter from a husband studying abroad to his wife at home.

Jiang Jiang, producer of the performance said that Spring Festival is a time for Chinese family reunions, and the recital of classical letters was arranged to arouse family affection and love, in addition to reminding people of the traditional way of conveying them: by hand-written letter.

The hand-written letter, as a traditional way of communication going back to ancient times, is fading out of people's lives, as telephone and emails dominate daily communications. However, letters still remain the best way of sending love and care for some people. As Wei Baoping, the author of one of the selected letters by ordinary people said, "Letters are the best way to encourage people in my opinion. I received many family letters in my life and they encouraged me, especially when I was away from home. I hope that my daughter can read the concept of strength from my letter."



By Zhu Lin

In contrast to his usual reticent manner, Cui Jian, the father of Chinese rock, raised his concerns about the future of Chinese singers performing live after his concert in Tianjin, "Live performances from Chinese singers might die out over the next five years!"

When he was asked to comment on the level of Chinese live vocal performances after his concert on February 7, he said, "Chinese singers' live concerts should come up to world standards. But in recent years, in order to reduce performing costs, concerts are prepared in a hurry, and corners are cut on lighting, staging and costume."

will be more and more professional performing managers, producers and artists coming to the Chinese performing market (from abroad) in the following years," said Cui, "If Chinese singers' live concerts keep falling in standard, they might die out in five years."

Cui's words are no exaggeration. The hottest pop band in Japan, Glay, will come to Beijing this July. Reporter Ding Ning went to one of Glay's live performances in January in Tokyo and was totally amazed by the super technology and management of the concert.

"The singers kept singing for four hours. Their voices were still as good as at the beginning," Ding recalled, "I don't think any Chinese bands could match that!"

Foreign bands are a real threat to China's live performance market, a threat that needs to be addressed to by domestic performers and managers.

Photo by Zhu Shan

By Zhu Lin

Qing Dynasty emperors have become the most frequently seen characters on today's Chinese TV programs. All men in Qing Dynasty wore a long braid, so the screenplays have been dubbed "Long-braid Play".

Qing Dynasty period dramas are endlessly pumped out on many channels, and viewers never tire of watching them. Why do people like them so much? "The Qing Dynasty is closest to modern people in time and it has so many legends. So, people are disposed to hear its stories," said Yang Zhen, expert on history of Qing Dynasty at the Chinese Academy of Social Science. The China

Central TV Station spent 35,800,00 yuan for the copyright of *Kangxi Empire*, and gained profits of one hundred million yuan.



Picture from *Kangxi Empire*

Seeing Through Emperors' Clothes

But the Qing Dynasty was also the most centralized feudal monarchy in Chinese history. "Kangxi Empire focuses on the emperors' achievements, but ignores the poison of feudalism and cruel cultural tyranny. That provides a severe misrepresentation to ordinary people," Yang emphasized.

The long feudal history has branded too deep a mark in Chinese consciousness as a whole. "Chinese people's servility will continue to exist in the following Chinese generations," warned Yang. "The TV series' efforts to beautify the emperors arouse people's inner dependency on the imperial masters. The logic is, as long as the emperor is nice, life will be nice! How dangerous it is!"

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THE ART OF CHINESE MASSAGE

By Jiao Pei

Chinese traditional massage has a long history. It is held in high regard for its effectiveness clearing and stimulating the network through which vital energy circulates and along which the acupuncture points are distributed, improving respiration and blood flow.

The recently opened fifth branch of Suncome Massage Center is situated in the Lido complex. Walking through the door, you might feel you are entering a teahouse rather than a massage parlor. The reception area is furnished with traditional style Chinese tables and chairs, tea sets, and Go boards, while classical Chinese music plays softly in the background. Customers are offered special tea before and after their massage. The type of tea depends on various factors, such as the season and the state of health of the customer. With Spring Festival and its associated feasting just behind us, the teas currently on offer promote digestion and relieve symptoms associated with overeating, complementing the effect of the massage.

The goals of massage therapy are to relieve the pressure from daily work and enhance the harmony between body and spirit and the serenity of balance. Taiji-based massage combines the soft, smooth traditional strokes with the longer, more nurturing "Tuina" healthy treatment.

The center is staffed with highly skilled and diversely trained therapists. One of the specialties is foot massage, developed from Chinese, Ancient Indian and modern medical theory. In Chinese medicine, the foot is called the "second heart". There are 126 acupuncture points on the feet, accounting for over one third of the acupuncture points on the whole body. Many of these points correspond to various internal organs, and when stimulated by a skilled therapist, improve the functioning of those organs. After an hour foot massage, you will feel your feet become much warmer than ever, and you will be healthier all over. It's magic!

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For Chocolate Lovers Only

By Lydia

The movie Chocolat told about a woman who moved to a small town in France and opened a chocolate shop. The locals were skeptical at first, but her delicately made chocolate eventually wove its magic and changed the townspeople's colorless way of life.

Just before Valentine's Day, the Belgian chocolate brand Valentino settled down in Beijing's Oriental Plaza, becoming one of the city's most popular shops on that romantic day. More than 80 different types of Valentino pralines are hand made in their Brussels factory and flown to China fresh every week!

The exquisitely decorated shop is in the center of the lower shopping arcade. The shop is divided into three parts; a cute counter displaying various shapes of chocolate and also ice cream, a delicate shelf of valentine candles and a mini bar. With the soft inner light and the sweet smile of salesgirl, you will hear "Belgium's chocolate is the best in the world, and Valentino stands for top quality!"

The rich and complex Valentino chocolate is not only mouth-wateringly delicious, it is also good for you, really! The key ingredients, cocoa bean and lecithin, prevent hardening of the arteries and contribute to the prevention of heart disease. Surely that is enough incentive to launch into a chocolate orgy!

No matter what chocolate stands for in your heart, childhood or sweet love, once a chocolate lover, always a chocolate lover. Like Juliet Binoche says in the movie, even if there's a heavy storm in the outside world, you know the inner self soothing and warming with a flow of chocolate flavor into the heart...

Add: Lower floor, Oriental Plaza, 3rd Street, EE08. **Open:** 9:30 am - 9:30 pm. **Price:** 6 yuan / piece. No telephone, better go there and have a look and a taste.



Photos by Chen Shuyi

Best Bites



Go Spanish!

By Lydia

Having spent a Chinese New Year and feasted on traditional Chinese food, how about a taste of Flamenco, with some bold and colorful Spanish food?

Spanish food, heavily dependant on potato, tomato, chilli and olive, is strongly influenced by Arabic culture. Just as cuisine in China differs greatly from south to north; people in the south of Spain prefer spicy food while northerners love seafood. Olive oil is the lifeblood of Spain's economy, and the key characteristic of Spanish cuisine is faintly scented olive oil.

Tapas, or Spanish snacks, are as diverse as perhaps yum cha is in Hong Kong, but olives, cheese and chorizo ham are the staples. Spanish people enjoy various seafood dishes, and Shrimps in Mashed Garlic is surely among the most popular. Due to the difference in climate, many seafood dishes are not available in Beijing's Spanish restaurants, however we still have mushrooms! People around the Mediterranean love to eat mushrooms, and mushroom salad or garlic mushrooms is absolutely delicious.

The best-known dish in Spain is paella. It is said that this rice dish originated in the southeast coastal area around Valencia - the Garden City. This dish usually includes chicken, rabbit, or seafood and different kinds of beans. Here in Beijing the most popular version is undoubtedly seafood paella. You can imagine the sweet-smelling rice plus the special flavour of seafood...fresh shrimps, squid, fish pieces, as well as chicken, chorizo sausage, onion, mashed garlic, tomato paste...

Finally, don't forget the delicate Spanish soups; chilled, fragrant gazpacho, the perfect summer appetizer! (After all, summer is on the way!)

With some sweet snacks like apple roll and almond cake, your Spanish dinner will leave you happy and replete.

Ashanti Restaurant, opposite north gate of Worker's Stadium. **Tel:** 64166231. **Open:** 6pm-2midnight.

Stepping into the restaurant, you are engulfed in a charming atmosphere of great Chinese sense. Only from the post-modern paintings hung on the wall could you experience some foreign sense. The Spanish chef specializes in northern Spanish cuisine.

Adria IV - Torero, No. 4 North Ritan Road (Ritanbeilu). **Tel:** 65950726. **Open:** 11am-11pm.

Serrano Restaurant, opposite North Plaza of Beijing West Railway Station. **Tel:** 63989999. **Open:** 6:30am-10pm.

What's your favorite shop, stand, bar or restaurant? We will be very happy to share your experience with all our readers and don't forget, a mystery gift is waiting for you if we print your story. Please contact us at 65902524 or 13910916642. Email: shopping@ynet.com.

Business Service 商务服务



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Beijing Office Market Heating up

By Wang Dandan

Beijing's office market has been developing smoothly since 2001, despite the effect on the global economy from the September 11 terrorist attack in the U.S. The successful bid for 2008 Olympics, the APEC meeting in Shanghai and entry to the WTO have all stimulated the office market, in terms of both supply and demand. Office supply in Beijing reached 1.5 million square meters, while the area sold or rented reached about 680,000 square meters, 17.5% higher than in 2000, with telecom, IT and finance companies the major consumers.

Office supply doubled

Supply in Beijing will reach one million square meters this year, double last year's amount. Chaoyang District will provide one million square meters; Dongcheng District nearly 200,000 square meters; Xicheng District about 600,000 square meters; Haidian district nearly 800,000 square meters, with the remaining districts making up about 600,000 square meters. For the first time, the supply of office space in the western part of Beijing will exceed that in east.

With the entry to WTO, the market rules in China will change significantly. The first and most apparent changes will be that more and more foreign investment enters the local market.

In the past, foreign enterprises in Beijing tended to rent rather than purchase office space, says Liu Kai, real estate consultant for Beijing Office Information. However companies like Motorola and HP have already started to purchase office buildings.

At the same time, companies based in other cities are also purchasing office space in Beijing.

Grade-A offices face squeeze

The most heated competition in the office market in Beijing in 2002



will be in the A-grade office market. Top office buildings such as the World Trade Center, Kerry Center and Fortune Center are offering favorable terms for renting offices. Meanwhile grade-B office buildings attract customers with lower rent and flexible means of payment, especially attractive to the newly established companies.

The result is that grade-A office buildings will have difficulties finding tenants. With over 70% of the office buildings to be completed in 2002 grade-A offices, competition is set to intensify even further.

The breakdown of price chains of office buildings will lie in grade-A offices, as they have to lower their rent and property management fees to match grade-B offices. Otherwise they risk losing out on market share.

Business apartments on the way

Business apartments first ap-

peared in the Beijing market in 2001. Such apartments aim at small companies and companies from other cities. They are suitable both for working and living.

The construction of such business apartments enriches Beijing's office market while showing that Beijing has entered a concept-marketing era.

Compared with normal office buildings, business apartments alter the pure office image, focusing more on business-oriented functions. They stress fresh air supply, grass areas, natural sunlight and storage. With lower prices, the business apartments are attractive to small companies.

Investors reenter the market

With such a large office supply, will investors move into the market? Back in 1993 and 1994, many investors from other Asian countries entered the Beijing market. Many only checked the computer image and brochures before investing, as the office

buildings were believed to have at least 20% reward after the investment. The rapid purchasing caused a supply crisis, and then financial crisis struck, wiping out the dream of fast profits.

This year, with the development of the domestic economy and real estate industry in Beijing, investors no longer mainly come from foreign countries. However, domestic investors prefer to invest in apartments, such as Soho New Town. More and more investors are buying apartments. Among the total apartments sold in the CBD area, 40% of the purchasers are investors, with some individuals buying over 10 apartments.

At present, one factor that blocks investment in offices is the first payment. Bank loans for office buildings are capped at 50%, while for apartments, up to 80% can be paid for with a bank loan.

If financing regulations for office buildings are brought into line with those for apartments, more investors will turn to office investment, says Liu Kai.

Local developer era

In the 1990s, big office buildings such as the Kerry Center, Oriental Plaza and Beijing Henderson Center were nearly all financed by developers from Hong Kong.

This has changed in the 21st century. More and more local developers are now involved in office development. Even Legend group developed an office building: Raycom Infotech Park Tower in the Zhongguancun area.

However, Li Kashong transferred to the eastern part of the city to invest in apartment building. New World group also goes to Yizhuang to invest in apartment. This structure transformation shows that local developers have finally started entering the office market.



Pictures by Xie Feng

Be Cautious in Investing Holiday Hotels

By Wang Dandan

Golden Holiday Hotel opened recently in Yanqing County. Unlike usual hotels, this project is a holiday hotel. Rooms in holiday hotels, which are usually located at a tourist site, are generally sold to investors. The investor entrusts the management to maintain and rent out the rooms, or apartment for a set fee. For example, you buy the room, and when a guest checks into your room, you get the money. Usually the investor can have a certain period of free accommodation in the room each year.

The holiday hotel concept started in the 1970s in Europe. Several years ago, some cities in southern China introduced this form of management. Holiday hotels have recently appeared in Beijing. There are currently some 10 developers engaged in such projects locally. Shen Xiaofeng, the developer of Golden Holiday, says the project has sold nearly one third of the total apartments.

Is this investment so attractive and are there any risks?

The holiday hotel concept in China is still fresh to most investors. Even in cities where they have been established for several years, the situation is not entirely satisfactory. In Hainan Province, there are no real holiday hotels yet. The reason is that most developers are not aiming at developing tourism around the hotels, but selling them. Even more, developers at that time did not create the surroundings according to the hotels' need, but to make money.

If there is no tourism around the area at all, how can the holiday hotel survive? Besides, they sold the house before it was completed and disappeared after getting the money. It is mainly because the tourism industry was not developed yet and many people were not very clear what a holiday hotel should be.

Shi Xiaoming, the deputy director of Beijing Tourism Association says that investors need to be very cautious when investing in holiday hotels. First they must investigate the developer to see if they are reputable. Then they have to check all the procedures of the hotels, such as building quality, decorations and property management companies.

In terms of operating management, different hotels have different methods. Golden Holiday for example is low income, with low risk. Whatever the management, the investor will have 30,000 yuan per year, while the excess profits will belong to the property management company, and you have to sign a contract for at least five years. Other hotels entrust the property management company to rent the apartment and the investor gets the profits; perhaps 30,000 to 90,000 yuan per year. But the investor may get nothing during the whole year if the room or apartment remains vacant.

Southern Official's Hat Armchair

Home
Furnishing

By Li Dan / Wang Yang

As the tempo of life picks up, people often show a sense of nostalgia when decorating their home. Pieces of ancient furniture can provide both comfort and a sense of the romantic past.

Nanguanmaoyi, like Sichutou Guanmaoyi, is a kind of armchair that was widely popular in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, especially with the educated elite. The armchair resembles a court official's hat, but instead of protrusions at the four ends like the Sichutou Guanmaoyi chair, has a rounded, more comfortable shape. Since these chairs were mainly popular in South China, they came to be known as Nanguanmaoyi (Southern Official's Hat Armchair).

The back of the armchair is usually made of one plank and is S-shaped to fit the curve of the sitters back. There are always some carvings on it of symbols of good luck. The armchair is delicately and beautifully designed. The deceptively simple shape is the result of careful consideration.

In modern living space, Nanguanmaoyi has particular advantages. When it is put in the study, it will surely fit well the academic atmosphere; while in the living room, it will lend a sense of elegance to the house and show the owner's unique taste.

Special thanks to Guanfu Classic Art Museum.



Southern Official's Hat Armchair
Photo by Wang Dandan

Apartment Prices

High-end Apartments

The St. Regis

Rental Range: \$3,200-10,500

Description: Brand new, fully furnished serviced apartments, range from 1 bed to 4 beds, with net sqm range from 58.13m2 to 189.01m2.

Location: Chaoyang District. 20 minutes drive to airport.

Facilities: Gym, sauna, indoor swimming pool, Spa. Pool, billiard, children's playground, restaurant, conference room, beauty salon, flower shop, golf training center.

ments

Rental Range: \$1,350 - 4,900

Description: Within the complex is a small shopping arcade. All are serviced apartments with hotel style accommodations. 248 units in total, 1-3 beds, 42-153 net sqm.

Location: Chaoyang District. Near Lufthansa Shopping Center.

Facilities: Health club, swimming pool, tennis court, restaurants, bank, supermarket, playground.

Low-end Apartments

Ju Long

Rental Range: \$1,000- 5,000

Description: Villas and apartments available. 398 units, 1-4 beds, 105-347 sqm.

Location: Chaoyang District. Near Worker's Stadium and Swissotel.

Facilities: Sauna, health club, billiards, table tennis, restaurants, function room, conference, and more.

Warwick International Apartments

Rental Range: \$700 - 1,600

Description: Serviced apartment with large windows and open kitchen. Situated in a courtyard setting. Convenient outdoor parking. With 152 units, 34-78 net sqm, Studio to 2 beds.

Location: Chongwen District. Near 2nd Ring Road.

Facilities: Gym, coffee shop, and picnic area.

The above information is for reference only and provided by DTZ Debenham Tie Leung. For further information, please go to www.dtz.com or www.dtz.bj.cn, or residential@dtz.bj.cn

Medium-end Apartments

East Gate Plaza Apartments

Rental Range: \$2,450 - 8,300

Description: European style interior with open kitchens. Extensive indoor shopping plaza. 332 units in total, 2 beds to 4 beds, 135 to 319 gross sqm.

Location: Dongcheng District. Close to 2nd Ring Road.

Facilities: Health club, sauna, swimming pool, supermarket, shopping center; bank, post office and more.

Landmark Towers Apart-



Voidance of a Contract When Not Properly Fulfilled



Legal Aid

By Li Dan / Yan Ming

Michael Chang bought a penthouse apartment and signed a contract with the developer to the payment by installments.

After living in the apartment for nearly half a year, Michael found a big crack on the ceiling. He then asked the developer to repair it, as the apartment had come with a year's guarantee.

However, the repairs went on for nearly four months without any result, during which time Michael refused to continue the payments. At last he hired a company to appraise the quality of the apartment and found that it was not up to standard at all, so he asked the developer to return his payment. Meanwhile, the developer showed the receipt of

checking and accepting the apartment right after completing the project, not only refusing to return the payment, but also demanding compensation for breaking the contract and interest for the four months Michael had not paid.

Michael then took the developer to court. Based on the investigation by the court, the developer was told the apartment was not qualified. Since there is no precedent for returning an apartment, the developer should maintain it and also compensate Michael for his loss.

According to the law, a contract shall be void if it cannot be fulfilled properly. In this case, the quality problem of the apartment led automatically to the voidance of the contract. When Michael learned this, he instructed the bank to cease the payments. He has the right to do so in the event that the contract is not followed properly.



Quiz

Target: Beijing International Hotel
When: 16:30-17:00, Tuesday, Feb. 22nd
Hotel Detective: Li Dan

Thomas Wang, HK

I enjoy the breakfast here so much. It is cheap but delicious enough. Actually the tour group arranged for me to stay here. I think everywhere is clean and the room service is perfect. Shopping areas in the hotel attract me so much as well.

Ken Rogger, U.S.

This hotel is located in the golden area for me. It is near to the railway station, Wangfujing Street, Tian'anmen Square and Jianguomen Embassy area. I feel good here.

Berit Reitan, Norway

I walked to the Forbidden City just now and walked back as well! It was so good! This hotel has top quality service and I like the feeling here. Also, I like the bathroom, it feels like home really.

"HOUSING" welcomes your feedback: What kind of difficulties do you encounter when looking for housing in Beijing? What kind of information do you need? What can we help you with? Our E-mail: housing@ynet.com Tel: 65902522 Fax: 65902525

Movies

"Who Said I Don't Care?"

Directed by Huang Jianxin, starring Feng Gong, Feng Xiaogang, Wang Zhiwen, Fu Biao. A middle-aged married couple discover that they can't find their marriage certificate and are worried that they might have problems proving that they've not been living in sin all those years. Finally their daughter has a counterfeit one made for them. A hilarious comedy by a wonderful director with an all-star cast.

Where: Cherry Lane Movies. **When:** Feb. 22, 8pm. **Admission:** 50 yuan. **Tel:** 64615318.



French movies

Same Old Song, directed by Alain Resnais.

Where: Space for Imagination Coffee Shop, The Loft. **When:** Feb. 23, 24, The Loft. **Tel:** 62791280, 65065592.

Web: movie.newyouth.beida-online.com.



Nuovo Cinema Paradiso (Cinema Paradiso)

Director Giuseppe Tornatore
A successful film director returns home to a Sicilian village for the first time in 40 years. He reminisces about his childhood at the Cinema Paradiso where Alfredo, the projectionist, first inspired his love of films. An evocative and warmly nostalgic celebration of the magic of movies.

Admission: free. **Tel:** 65322187.

Dining Out



Vietnamese

1. Ma Cherie. Very upscale with a round interior designed to look like a gaint bamboo hut. Classical pianist and sometimes a harp player.

Where: 1/F Kunlun Hotel, 2 Xinyuan Nanlu, Chaoyang District. **Open:** 11:30am-2pm, 5:30pm-9:30pm. **Tel:** 65903388 ext. 5247.

2. Yilu House. This restaurant features a combination of Southeast Asian home-style dishes. Cozy and casual atmosphere.

Where: 3 Guandongdian, Chaoyang District. **Open:** 9am-1:30pm. **Tel:** 65956002.

Californian Cuisine

Louisiana presents authentic Northern California cuisine accompanied by Mondavi wines.

Where: Louisiana, Hilton Hotel, When: till March 31. **Tel:** 64662288 ext. 7420.

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation info for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 65902520. By Priscilla / Lydia

Exhibition

Oil Paintings & Sculptures Joint Exhibition

Works by Yin Kun, Xiao Se and Xiao Peng in 200 sq.m. exhibition hall. Also tens of sculptures on show.

Where: East Hall, Wan Fung Gallery, 136 Nanchizi Dajie, Dongcheng District. **When:** Mar.1-31, 9am-5pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 65233320/19.

Art Exhibition

Beijing Multivariate Contemporary Exhibition & Visual Arts Corporation present over 40 works by Lou Shibai.

Where: 502#, Building D, Block A, SOHO Modern City, 88 Jianguolu, Chaoyang District. **When:** Feb. 18-26, 9am-6pm. **Tel:** 85801007.

European Classical Oil Paintings Exhibition

Where: Beijing International Art Palace. **When:** Till March 5. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 65133388 ext 1208.

Beijing in our eyes

Works by Wu Jinan, Zhao Yanchao. Beijing - old articles, toys collected exhibition

Shadow puppet exhibition by Liu Jilin. **Where:** Yanhuang Art Museum, 9 Hui-zhonglu, Chaoyang District. **When:** Feb 8 - March 3. **Tel:** 64910909.

Schedule of Beijing Planetarium
10am, travel in the Universe, 11am, 2pm. Exhibition of the Dinosaur & the Collision of celestial, 12am, 3pm, The Marvellous



Starry Sky, till Feb. 24. 1:30pm, Travel in the Universe, 2:30pm, The Marvellous Star Sky.

Where: Beijing Planetarium, 138 Xizhimenwai Dajie. **Tel:** 68361691.

Classical Realism

More than 130 oils in the category of classical realism by 40 artists, including Wen Lipeng, Ma Changli and Zhang Qingruo.

Where: East Gallery, 3/F, Deshengmen Watchtower, North 2nd Ring Road, Xicheng District. **When:** till Feb 28, 9 am - 6 pm. **Tel:** 82014962. **Admission:** 2 yuan.

Family Registry

Shao Yinong's unique family genealogy is a 38-meter long photo work mounted on a traditional Chinese scroll. It is a nice example of contemporary Chinese conceptual photography.

Where: Courtyard Gallery, Donghuamen Dajie, Dongcheng District. **When:** till mid March, Sat 11am-7pm, Sun noon-7pm. **Tel:** 65268882.



Performances



Punchline Comedy Club

John Moorhead presents direct from London's Comedy Circuit. Performers: John Fothergill and Mark Walker

Where: The New Poachers Inn, 43 Beisanlitun, Chaoyang District. **When:** March 1 & 2, 8pm sharp. **Admission:** 200 yuan. **Tel:** 13910826384.

Tuo'er (The Cheat)

A comedy by Chen Peisi. It was used to public screened last year.

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie, **When:** Feb. 26, 27, Mar. 1-3, 7:30pm. **Tel:** 65065345.

Ou Ren Ji

(Legend of a Puppet)

Directed by Li Liuyi. **Where:** Mini Theater of People's Art Theater, Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District. **When:** Feb. 25 - Mar. 10, 7:15pm. (Closed on Mondays). **Admission:** 80, 100 yuan. **Tel:** 65250123.



Activities

YPHH - Young Professional Happy Hour

Where: Schiller's 3, west gate of Chaoyang Park. **When:** Feb. 27, from 6:30pm.

Beijing Hash House Harriers - The Drinking Club With A Running Problem

Forget Me Not and Squatter, Annual Valentine's Day Hash (Ladies Only)

Where: Mexican Wave, 150 meter north of Guiyou Shopping Center. **When:** 2:30pm, Feb. 24. **Tel:** 65063901.

Doctor's Talks

Answers to your health questions. Vaccinations - What do you need? Emergency Situations - What to do? Local medical facilities - how good are they? Each month, SOS holds a free informative session on medical issues pertinent to healthy living and traveling in China. Whether one has recently moved to China or has lived here for a period of time, the info gained from these sessions will be of great value to both you and your family. Better make a reservation.

Where: Beijing International SOS Clinic, Building C, BITIC Leasing Center, 1 Xingfusan-cun Beilu, Chaoyang District. **When:** 6-7pm, Feb. 28. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 64620555 ext. 272.



Doctor's Talks



CNN Community Service International Newcomers Network.

All new arrivals to Beijing are welcome to attend. This is a chance to meet people, have a coffee and a chat, and learn about life in Beijing. Guest speaker will discuss adoptions, volunteering and charities in China.

Where: 3F, Fuction room, Athletic Center, Capital Mansion. **When:** Feb. 25, 10am-noon. **Contact:** innchn@bigfoot.com

La Leche League of Beijing

Offering information, encouragement and support for breastfeeding mothers. Meetings held on the forth Tuesday of every month at 2pm at Beijing United Family Hospital. All pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and nursing babies are welcome to attend.

Where: Beijing United Family Hospital. **Tel:** 8079-6988.

Chess

Get together for occasional fun sessions. Contact Beatrice **Tel:** 13681464482 (Beatrice). **Email:** beatrice.fourny @dree.org

Salsa Pekina

Salsa Pekina is teaching classes for beginners and intermediates on different days and at a number of venues. They change dance partners frequently so people will meet many new friends.

Tel: 13681228690 (Steve).

Website: www.salsapekina.com.

Music

The Lawrence String Quartet and clarinetist Fan Lei

The Lawrence String Quartet from U.S.A. will perform string quartets and clarinet quintet.

Fan Lei is regarded as China's premier clarinetist. He has performed chamber music recitals with several of the world's leading musicians.

Program: Dmitri Shostakovich's Quartet No. 1, Op. 49; Carl Maria von Weber's Quintet in Bb; Franz Schubert's Quartetsatz in C minor, and Maurice Ravel's String Quartet.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall, Zhongshan Park. **When:** Feb. 25, 7:30pm. **Tel:** 65598285. **Admission:** 50-600 yuan.

Large-scale Magic Play - Mysterious Light

Where: Minority Cultural Palace Theater, 49 Fuxingmennei Dajie, inside Minzu Hotel. **When:** Feb. 22-24. **Admission:** 90-280 yuan. **Tel:** 66059881.

Concert to Celebrate the Lantern Festival

Traditional Music Ensemble of China Opera and Dance House **Where:** National Library Concert Hall, 33 Zongguancun Nand-



ajie, Haidian District. **When:** Feb. 26, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 30-180 yuan. **Tel:** 88545348.

Symphonic Concert

By China Symphonic Orchestra. **Programme:** Krzysztof Penderecki: Viola Concerto (Cello Version), Felix Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 3 in A Minor, Op. 56.

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, West Chang'an Avenue. **When:** Feb. 24, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 30-220 yuan. **Tel:** 66057006.

House & Techno

Every Friday: House; Saturday, Techno.

Where: Club Vogue. **When:** 10pm. **Admission:** 50 yuan. **Tel:** 13910062444, slab@mac.com.

Sports

Hiking: Vulture Rock to Miaofeng Mountain

Where: Mentougou County, west of Beijing. Walking time: 4 hours. Difficulty: 4. What to take and wear: Daypack, water, lunch, good hiking boots, hat, gloves, scarf, layered clothing, windbreaker. Cost: 100 yuan, including hot drinks and snacks (collected on the bus). Open to everyone: Email bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk or call Hui-lin at 13701003694.

Super Football Fans

The ClubFootball Bar, Beijing's pace-setting football, theme bar & restaurant. Big Screen. Exclusive memorabilia signed by

some of the world's top players. Unique, international menu. And, from World Cup Qualifiers to the English Premiership, UEFA Champions League to the Spanish Primera - we've got it all!

Feb 22: Late Happy Hour, 9-10pm, buy 1 get 1 free on all drinks.

Feb 23: Manchester United vs Astonpm, 7:55pm; Liverpool vs Everton, 10:55pm.

Feb 24: Sunderland vs Newcastle, 9:55pm.

All Live & English Premiership!

Where: No. 10 Taipingzhuang, near Red House Hotel, Chunxiulu, Dongzhimenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District. **Tel:** 64150988/64167786.

Bar Events

Every Wed, Club Green, rock out with famous poet/musician Dou Wei and then go heavy on the jazz, 9:30pm-midnight. **Tel:** 65906688.

Every Thu, Get Lucky, underground music gathering, 9:30pm onwards, 20-50 yuan. **Tel:** 64204249.

Every Thu & Sat, Club Green, ladies night, free entry, 7pm-3am. **Tel:** 6590 6688.

Every Fri, Jam House, if clubbing is running you ragged, groove out to the Afro-pop sounds of Mitabe, 9:30pm onwards. **Tel:** 65063845.

Every Fri & Sat, Peter Pan, it's not really a bar but gets pret-

ty smoky in there with all that Latin and all, 8pm-midnight. **Tel:** 65950680, www.salsa-pekina.com.

Every Sun, Jam House, one of Beijing's newest jazz outfits, 5pm-2am. **Tel:** 65053845.

Every Fri, Vic's, student night, the now famous student R&B, hip hop party, 20 yuan, 9pm onwards. **Tel:** 65936215.

Every Sat, Vic's Saturday Happy Hour before midnight means buy one get one free on all drinks, 9pm onwards. **Tel:** 65936215.

Music at Bars

Blues by Rhythm Dog, Jam House, Feb. 22, 9pm, 65063845.

Underground Melody, Get Lucky 64299019, Feb. 22, 8 pm.

Jump Party, Vic's, 65936215, Feb. 23, 10 pm.

Blues and pops from 'Swing Fish', Dirty Nellies Irish Pub, Feb. 23, 9pm, 65022808.

Evening News, T9, Tribe, Feb. 22, 9pm, Launch of the Underground Music Net, Feb. 23, 9pm, Get Lucky Bar. **Tel:** 64299109.



Auction

Real Estate

Over 20 apartments in 7 different places are under the hammer. Held by Zhongdu International Auction.

Where: 2nd Auction Hall, 4F, Jewelry Exchange Center, 2 Huixindongjie, Chaoyang District, 2km

north of China-Japanese Friendship Hospital. Subway to Yonghegong, take bus 62 to Xiaoying, or bus 18, 119, 408, 367 to Xiaoying.

When: March. 3, 2pm. Preview, now till March 2, 9:30am-5pm, tel: 13801200808, 13001014325. **Tel:** 84636729, 84636722.

Job Opportunity

Beida Language school looks for foreign teachers (native English speaker) with Chinese knowledge, and experience preferably. We pro-

vide competitive salary, small class (8-12).

Tel: 62754303, 13701055942.

Email: sunlightenglish@263.net

Every Spring Festival the Lama Temple, or Yonghegong (雍和宫), fills to an overflowing capacity of worshippers offering incense and prayers to the various deities of the Buddhist pantheon. The smell of incense permeates every corner of the temple and hangs over the surrounding streets, so much so that locals refer to the Lama Temple as the "Temple of Incense".



Photos by East

Cultural Tour

Explore The Old College Street



The stone archway guarding the former warehouse of Japanese occupying forces

By Jiang Zhong

The scent of incense wafts along Guozijianjie (国子监街), the street running west opposite the main entrance to the Lama Temple, mixing with the smell of the cypresses in the Confucius Temple and the musty books on the shelves of the Guozijian (国子监 Imperial College).

Guozijianjie has two names

The plaque on the easternmost and westernmost of the four stone arches along the street bear the name Chengxianjie (成贤街), while the other two, the street signs and doorplates read Guozijianjie. Chengxianjie is the original name of the street, however when the municipal government began drafting a modern map of the capital after 1949, it was changed to Guozijianjie, or Imperial College Street, as the historic complex was such a familiar landmark to Beijingers.

For overseas visitors however, Guozijian is not so well known as the Lama Temple or its close neighbor, the Confucius Temple. The area in front of the entrance is even used as a supplementary car park for the Lama Temple. However if you are visiting the Lama Temple or the Confucius Temple, you should not overlook

the Imperial College.

The Imperial College

An Imperial College was first constructed on this site in 1288, during the Yuan Dynasty. However no trace of the original structure remains within the large courtyard today; the complex you see was all built during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Only a cypress and a pine tree standing before the Yilun Hall attest to its even more ancient history.

In Chinese, the name Guozijian is invariably followed by the word Piyong (辟雍), which is actually the name of the hall built by Qing Emperor Qianlong inside the first stone archway after the main entrance. In old Beijing, Piyong Hall was as well known a landmark as the Gate of Heavenly Peace (Tian'anmen), the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests at the Temple of Heaven and the corner towers of the Forbidden City.

In the teachings of Confucius, Piyong refers to the concept of "Heaven's Knowledge". Emperor Qianlong considered that such knowledge should incorporate theories about everything in the universe. Hence a round pool was dug, representing heaven, with a cubic hall in the center representing the earth. While

this hall may not have been entirely successful in enlightening the ancient scholars with theories of "everything in the universe", it gives tourists today a sense of the pivotal role Confucius plays in Chinese history.

Students at the Guozijian had to adhere to extremely severe rules, and many committed suicide under the pressure. Emperor Taizu (1368-1399) of the Ming Dynasty drafted some particularly harsh regulations, a number of which the punishment for breaking was beheading. These rules can be found carved on a stone tablet standing near Yilun Hall, the building behind Piyong Hall.

As for the Lama and Confucius Temples, if you haven't already visited them, you can find a very detailed introduction to them in most guidebooks!

Day tour to Guozijian Alley

Since the Imperial College and the Confucius Temple are both places for studying, it is strongly recommended that you visit them in a serene state of mind! A leisurely stroll through the alleys running off Guozijianjie is a most effective means of achieving such a state.

Begin your hike at the western end of the street, where you can find one of the four stone archways that span Guozijianjie.

Walk about one hundred meters east to the first branch alley, Dagexiang (大格巷), on your left. Walking along this lane you will find a very old door at number 20 Dagexiang. This is a typical door of a Siheyuan, or courtyard house. The Mendun (Guarding Stone) standing on either side of the door, Humentie (Protective Shield) on the door-boards and Menlou (Decorative Tower) above the door all retain the original Qing Dynasty appearance. A fat cat can usually be seen laz-

ing on the Menlou, enjoying the sun.

Further along, at number 12 Dagexiang, you will find a small wooden shed. On each plank are carved bold calligraphy works. These are the works of Imperial College graduates who failed to be appointed to a court position. Such people found employment in writing couplets for locals, transcribing Buddhist doctrines for temples and filling out indictments for plaintiffs. Even this shed used for storage is decorated with wonderful calligraphy works, evidence of the scholarly atmosphere that once permeated this part of town.

In this lane you will find many other interesting things, including a metal banner bearing a slogan that was popular during the Great Cultural Revolution. It says Red Hearts Devoted to the Chinese Communist Party.

Come back out of the alley and walk further eastward. In fifty meters you will come to Jianchang Hutong (箭厂胡同) on your left. Turn right at the first branch on your right in the alley. You will find a very splendid quadrangle. Such quadrangles can be found here and there around Guozijianjie, they were all once occupied by people of great power and wealth. Some residents of the quadrangles are descendants of renowned politicians.

Ten meters ahead, you will see a grey stone archway, which is even higher than the four standing in Guozijianjie. The locals will tell you very different stories about its history. Some say that rich merchants of the Qing Dynasty built it as testament to their sincerity and honesty in business. Others claim that Japanese occupying forces built it in the 1930s, to demonstrate their goodwill toward the local populace, in an effort to reduce the hostility against them at that time. The typically Japanese architectural features to be seen in the arch lend weight to this story.

Return to Jianchang Alley, walk northward until Wudaoying Hutong, the last before the Second Ring Road. On both sides of this alley you will find many magnificent courtyard houses, one after another. The style is different from those in other parts of Beijing, and they are much larger. The residents of some of these will allow you to go in and inspect their splendid courtyards.

Continuing eastward along Wudaoying Hutong (五道营胡同), you will see the magnificent roofs of the Lama Temple at the end.

The main entrance to the temple is opposite the eastern end of Guozijianjie. After coming out of the temple, you can visit the rest of the street. Near the stone archway at the eastern end, you will find a modern art gallery and a bird shop next to each other. By now you should have attained the serene state of mind required to fully appreciate the Imperial College and the Confucius Temple!



Old door featuring intact Humentie, Mendun and Menlou



Mendun at 55 Wudaoying Hutong; with carved animals and flowers representing everlasting blessing



Intricate carvings found under the eave of a Menlou at Wudaoying Hutong



The shed made of planks carved with the calligraphy works of graduates of the Imperial College

Yellow Sea In Luoping

By Jiang Zhong

Luoping (罗平) borders Yunnan and Guizhou provinces and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. It is said that a cock's crow in Luoping can be heard in all these provinces.

For tourists the most attractive thing about Luoping must be the sea of rape flowers that can be seen every March. When the rape flowers blossom, the ancient buildings of Luoping appear like stone islands surrounded by a 'yellow sea'.

The high mountains provide ideal vantage points for admiring both the sunrise and the sea of flowers. In the mornings at this time of year, a thick fog usually envelops the city. Soon the rays of the sun intensify the details of the mountains and begin to burn through the fog cover and all at once, the 'yellow sea' emerges suddenly before you.

The beekeepers are already hard at work in the 'sea'; their trucks look like small boats floating leisurely.

Luoping also features typical karst limestone landforms and many geology enthusiasts are attracted here. In 1638 Xu Xiake, a famous scientist of the Ming Dynasty visited Luoping. He later wrote that a visit to

Luoping should be a must for your trip to the eastern part of Yunnan.

Tips:

The best time for a trip to Luoping is in March;

The most popular place for admiring the sunrise and the flower sea is on the top of Jinji (金鸡 Golden Rooster) Mountain, which is located in the northeast of Luoping County.

Getting there:

Train or plane to Kunming, then taxi to Luoping (4 hours, 200-300 yuan per day)



Great Wall Buffs



Photo by Lugouxiaoyue

Ornate Great Wall at Mashui Pass

By Jiang Zhong

The Great Wall at Mashui Pass (马水关) is still in use till today, but rather than keeping out invaders from the north, it now serves as an enclosure for cotton crops, or prevents cattle from wandering too far afield. Built in the mountains of Zhulu County, Hebei Province, the Great Wall here was originally built during the Warring States Period (403 BC-221BC).

There are a total of twenty-seven watchtowers in this section, all decorated with intricate stone carvings. The best-preserved of them is missing only six or seven bricks, and features intact arrow-holes arranged vertically in two layers. Inside the watchtower, the four corners of the roof feature a lotus bud design. The passage linking the two floors was constructed high enough for a man to walk through without stooping, unlike other sections of the wall.

The fort at Mashui Pass has a history of some 530 years and was once an important troop station. Many high-ranking court officials were sent to supervise the pass during the Ming and Qing dynasties. All these officials

ordered partial rebuilding or redecorating of the Great Wall, to ensure it was commensurate with their status.

As nearby Yongning Mountain was the place where the Ming emperors and empresses were buried, high ranking officials were sent to ensure the pass was well-protected, and the government invested heavily in maintaining and improving this section of the Great Wall.

The pass could not be constructed into a square fortress because of the steep terrain. The fortress featured eastern and western passes and an inner city. The magnificent department offices and the officials' residences were located in the inner city, which was guarded by the eastern and western passes.

The western pass featured only one watchtower but no walls. The reason for this was that the pass is located on a very steep section of mountainside, making the construction of a wall very difficult. However the terrain served as a natural defense, even more effective than a wall.

For more information visit:
<http://www.thegreatwall.com.cn>